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ABSTRACT

Designed to help develop a model for training and support in childminding, this report provides a close analysis of regional meetings on training and support needs in London, England. The discussion is presented in three sections. The first part provides examination of the background of the project, current trends and approaches, and justification for theoretical viewpoints. Regional meetings are outlined in part II according to organization, attendance, format, finance, and analysis of the recorded information. Specifically, the analysis of information outlines the method of analysis, issues and topics raised, categorization of issues, development within regions, key issues and problems, and conclusions. Part III based on a prior collection of 255 issues of concern, provides a revision of modules, levels, and topics for childminding training and support. A graphic format displays central core topics: social, educational, and community services; health and safety; relationships and attitudes; purposeful play and child development; abnormal development; practical workshop topics; causes for concern in childminding; and wider current issues. Condensations of group discussions are appended. (BJD)

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# TRAINING AND SUPPORT
# IN CHILDMINDING
# --A NATIONAL RESPONSE

A report on the outcome of regional meetings on training and support needs, held during 1981/82.

Joyce Beckwith
October 1982

PS 013362

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# CONTENTS

PAGE

THE AUTHOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE PROJECT:

INTRODUCTION 1

PART I BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT 3

PART II REGIONAL MEETINGS ON TRAINING AND SUPPORT August 1981 - July 1982 13

1. Objectives 13
2. Organisation of the Meetings
3. Attendance 14
4. Format of Meetings
5. Finance 15
6. Analysis of the recorded information 16
   (a) Method of Analysis 16
   (b) Total issues and topics raised
   (c) Categorization of the issues 17
   (d) Development in the regions 23
   (e) Key issues and problems 30
   (f) Conclusions to Parts 1 and 2 34

PART III REVISION OF MODEL FOR CHILDMINDING TRAINING AND SUPPORT 36

Central Core Topics 38
Social Services
Educational and Community Services 39
Health and Safety 39
Relationships and Attitudes 40
Purposeful Play
Child Development - Physical & Sensory 41
- Social and Emotional
- Intellectual & Language 42
Abnormal Development
Practical Workshop Topics 43
Causes for Concern in Childminding
Wider Current Issues 44

APPENDIX 1 45

# THE AUTHOR

Joyce Beckwith has a wide range of practical work, study and research experiences in child and family care spanning several disciplines and age groups. Formerly Head of a nursery school in the 1960's, she obtained her first degree in psychology at the University of Manchester and later an M.Sc. in Child Development at the University of London Institute of Education.

Her interest in childminding training and support began to develop about four years ago when, as a Senior Day Care Officer in a London Borough she began a fruitless search for appropriate training materials suitable for adult care-givers in a family day-care setting. At the same time, her first-hand experiences with childminders, parents and social services colleagues led her to seriously question many of the research findings and assumptions about "stereotyped" childminders.

As a result, she began to develop a "model" for training and support in childminding from a "shared-care" perspective which would encompass the needs and interests of all partners in the care arrangement. This report is a preliminary one giving the results of the past year's intensive work validating and modifying some of her original ideas. This thesis is to be expanded further in a book which should be ready for publication early next year.

Having now moved to her present job as Planning Adviser (Child and Family Care) with the London Borough of Waltham Forest, Joyce no longer works directly with under-fives services. Nevertheless, she remains an enthusiastic member of the N.C.M.A., liaising closely with its elected committee and officers, and takes every opportunity to travel around the country in her "non-work" time, talking with childminders and under-fives workers. She has also recently visited childminders in the U.S.A.

As a single parent with four (now grown up) children, as well as having to manage a full time career, she is acutely aware of the realities of the "mis-match" between day-care provisions and family needs in a rapidly changing social, political and economic situation, yet is confident that childminding, as an integral part of the total child care system, can meet this challenge if all partners involved have a genuine commitment to work together to do so.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all the individuals and organisations who gave so much practical help and personal and professional support during the past year. Without their assistance this project would not have been feasible. It is impossible to acknowledge every single person individually so I hope that each helper will accept that they are automatically included in this all-embracing "Thank-you".

However, the following persons did undertake a major role as "link-persons" undertaking the local and regional organisation and administration, liaising with the N.C.M.A. and myself, centrally, and generally bearing the brunt of the work. Others provided accommodation, offered their services as speakers, set up exhibition and information stands, acted as group leaders and note-takers, organised raffles and other fund-raising events, arranged printing and publicity, provided me with "crash-pads", organized refreshments, or otherwise offered valuable resources - often free of charge.

In particular, I thank Celia Smith, Jane Maughn, Ann Goddard, Ann Rowe, Marge Paling, all other members of the N.C.M.A. Executive Committee and the office staff at Bromley for sharing with me the responsibilities (and inevitable headaches) of central administration and co-ordination as well as ensuring that I had support at most of the regional meetings.

This has been a fine example of a truly collaborative project which I hope has set a precedent for future Childminding initiatives. For myself personally it has been a very enriching experience from which I have learned so much from so many people as well as making a lot of new friends.

JOYCE BECKWITH.

## LINK PERSONS IN THE REGIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Diane Barter, | Aldershot Childminding Association |
| Jean Bowerbank, | Scotland Regional Representative and Edinburgh Childminder. |
| Jennifer Cameron, | East Midlands Regional Representative and Long Eaton Childminder. |
| Margaret Charlton, | Cleveland Childminder. |
| Irene Cohen, | Save the Children Fund Manchester Project. |
| Malcolm Cole, | Secretary, Under-fives steering group, Hampshire Social Services Department. |
| Maureen Cooper, | Greater London Regional Representative, and Childminder. |
| Yvonne Deane, | Co-ordinator, N.C.H. Bracknell Children's Centre. |
| Sue Degden, | Secretary, Darlington Childminders Group |
| David Drennan, | Principal Officer, South Glamorgan Social Services Department |
| Celia Dyson, | Adviser for Under-fives, Derbyshire Social Services Dept. |
| Marion Griffin, | Royal County of Berkshire Social Services, Slough Division. |
| Naomi Johnson, | Save the Children Fund Trinity House Project, Manchester. |
| Lesley Loades, | East Anglia Regional Representative and Norwich Childminder. |
| Mary Lowndes, | North West Regional Representative, and Manchester Childminder |
| Jane Maughn, | Development Officer, N.C.M.A. |
| Hilda McChlery, | Social Education Adviser, Glasgow Division, Strathclyde, Social Work Department. |
| Judith Mobeley, | Coventry Social Services Department |
| Gill Moore, | Royal County of Berkshire Social Services Department, Bracknell Division. |
| Chris North, | West Midlands Regional Representative and Coventry Childminder |
| Marge Paling, | Hon.Treasurer, N.C.M.A., and Nottingham Childminder. |
| George Pennell, | Principal Officer, Strathclyde Social Work Department. |
| Diane Pollit, | North East Regional Representative. |

Toni Rawson, Deputy Chairman, N.C.M.A., and Leeds Childminder.
Barbara Redwood, Wales Regional Representative and Cardiff childminder.
Anne Shields, Glasgow West Childminding Group
Rosalind Vail, (and the Greater London Childminding Group) Lewisham Childminding Association.
Pam Whyte, Training Co-ordinator, Southampton Childminding Association.

## SPEAKERS

Additionally, I would like to thank the following persons who gave very stimulating and informative talks at some of the larger meetings:-

- Frances Hartley, Toy Libraries Association.
- Bruce Buckley, Principal Assistant Director (Community Services) Derbyshire Social Services Department
- Willem Van Der Eyken, President, N.C.M.A.
- Ray Jackson, N.S.P.C.C., Leeds
- Councillor Albert J. Long, Chairman, Strathclyde Social Work Committee
- Sue Owens, Information Officer, N.C.M.A.
- Celia Smith, General Secretary, N.C.M.A.
- Barbara Trevina, Gingerbread Association for single parents

## ORGANISATIONS WHO OFFERED RESOURCES OR ASSISTED IN OTHER WAYS

### Social Services and Education Departments

Coventry City Council
Derbyshire County Council
Hampshire County Council
Leeds City Council
Manchester City Council
Norfolk County Council
Regional Council for Strathclyde
Royal County of Berkshire
County of South Glamorgan
Southampton City Council

### Others

Bank of Scotland
Barnardos
Bedford House Day Centre
Brunel University
Abbey National
Camera Talks Ltd.
College of Building and Printing, Glasgow
Darlington Arts Centre
Elm Bank Teachers Centre, Coventry
Farnborough College of Technology
Galts Ltd.
Gingerbread Association
Hampshire County Library
Health Education Council
Health Visitors, Paediatricians, Speech therapists
London University Extra mural Dept.
Marriners Day Centre, Leeds
Mitford Childrens Centre, Islington
National Childrens Centre, Huddersfield
N.S.P.C.C. Leeds
Nottingham Educational Supplies
National Childrens Homes
N.C.M.A. and Greater London Group
Open University Community Education Department
P.P.A. (Resource centres: Bulk buying centres: Training officers)
R.O.S.P.A. (and Tufty Club)
Save the Children Fund, Manchester
Toy Libraries Association
Wensum Lodge Education and Arts Centre, Norwich

Plus various local radio stations and newspapers, community groups, play schemes and after-school clubs, childminding groups and local trades people who offered support.

# THE PROJECT

## INTRODUCTION

Where does one begin to put into a few thousand words the accumulated results of a year's work of meticulously recording observations and discussions among approximately 1,300 people, over a total of 80 hours of talking in small groups, at 15 regional seminars, meetings, conferences or study days on Training and Support in Childminding - particularly when brevity of words has never been a quality I possess!

Faced with the formidable task of analysing this huge pile of notes and scripts, it took over four weeks from the date of the final meeting in Cardiff before I had even the courage to begin to sort it into some reasonable order let alone begin the analysis. However, being a "planning person" whose working life revolves around meeting time-scales for project developments, policy meetings and committee cycles, I decided that the only sensible approach was to set a very tight work schedule and stick to it! Looming not too far ahead was the ultimate goal - to have the final report ready for discussion at the Annual General meeting in October.

Well, that was the plan, but like all the best plans things did go astray. A series of mini-crises prevented me from sticking to the dates set, but with a final spurt of energy supported by a plentiful supply of midnight oil, after-eight mints and black coffee the report did finally get written, and here it is. I will leave you to decide upon its relative value whilst I de-camp after the A.G.M. for a good, long holiday.

Once the start on the analysis was made it seemed to fall quite naturally into three distinct parts, so this is the way I have chosen to present it here. First, a discussion on the background to the project, the current trends and approaches, and some justification for adopting this particular theoretical viewpoint; secondly, information about some of the work currently being undertaken in training and support, with reference to some of the major issues arising from these regional discussions; and thirdly, the Mark II revision of my earlier Mark I model, based upon the information and feedback from the regions.

If I were to very briefly summarise the findings of the past year's work it would be to express considerable optimism about the way in which childminding has developed so rapidly in a very short period of time. The predictions I made earlier at the Birmingham Conference on Training in 1981 about the development of different kinds of childminding and the associated need for different kinds of training and support is already being borne out. Childminding is itself responding to these changing developments but the rate of progress between and within regions is very patchy. At this stage, I am confident that the theoretical framework of the original model remains a valid one whilst at the same time accepting that adjustments to the content of specific modules and topics was necessary in the light of the past year's findings.

As you read through this report I would ask you to keep two key words in mind. The first is the word "Support" and the second is the word "Childminding". This is because when the term "Training and Support" is used this implies that these two activities are inextricably intertwined and that Training is only one aspect of the total support system, and secondly, the word "Childminding" is used rather than "Childminders" because we are talking about a care relationship that involves all partners in the arrangement, with parents, childminders and local authority workers having a degree of responsibility and "sharing" the care, often with other members of the wider family and community. So, we are not merely talking about the training of childminders! To do so would neglect to consider the needs of all partners and the whole dynamic, interacting relationship between them.

# PART I BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Childminding is now an essential part of the total child care system which is itself undergoing dramatic changes with the "shift" away from the institutional care of children towards care within the community. Childminding registrations have increased rapidly over the past couple of years from 30,000 to 43,000, according to recent D.H.S.S. figures, and childminders now take three times more children under five years in day care than do day nurseries, with the current total running at around 103,000. This is without taking account of the large numbers of older children in extended day care situations with childminders (before and after school) and the unknown number of children with unregistered minders. Estimates on this have widely varied between 100,000 and 500,000. So, childminding already constitutes by far the largest section of day care services for under-fives, is the most rapidly expanding one, is the most controversial yet, by comparison with other under-fives services, is the least supported.

In addition, the "changing face" of childminding is now clearly beginning to be seen, as more and more local authorities develop childminding subsidy, sponsorship, day fostering or day carer schemes to relieve their heavy day nursery waiting lists for "social priority children", undertake more early preventive work to avoid reception of young children into local authority care, or use family day care placements in the community rather than full residential or foster care as part of their strategic planning for families. What is this trend likely to mean for childminding training and support?

Perhaps at this point we should explode a few "myths" about child care statistics and trends generally to see what implications they are likely to have for childminding in the future. The first popularly held myth is that with the recent drop in child population of 9% between 1974 and 1981, child care provisions can safely be constricted. Yet, if we look at the O.P.C.S. population projection figures some interesting differences emerge between the various age-bands. Whereas a decrease is predicted for the 10-14 years and 15-19 years age groups by the early 1990's, the numbers of under-fives is expected to increase by 30%, and the 5-9 years by 6½%. Both of these two age bands contain the children of greatest concern for childminding. Present population statistics are already confirming an upswing in population and an increase in birth rates although whether these will reach the figures predicted remains to be seen.

The second myth is that fewer children are now coming into the care of the local authorities so this gives further "evidence" to support a contraction of services. If we refer merely to numbers then this might appear to be the case, but if it is viewed instead as proportions of the total child care population (bearing in mind that the child population fell over the past 10 years), then there has, in effect, been a proportional increase of children in local authority care. Whereas in 1976 it was 7.5 per 1,000, by 1980 this had risen to 7.9 per 1,000.

At this point, childminders or under-fives workers reading this report may be feeling somewhat perplexed and wondering what on earth "children in care" figures has to do with childminding - which after all is a largely private arrangement in the voluntary community sector! Well, let us pursue this line of argument a little further, bearing in mind also the earlier references to the "changing face" of childminding, as we consider an interesting paradox.

We have just highlighted an increasing under-fives population, yet, there are far fewer under-fives in local authority care (The majority of children in care are older children and adolescents). We also pointed to the proportional increase of total children in care between 1976 and 1980 yet, again, when we look at the different age bands we see that there has been a fall of 26.6% of under-fives in care. Why is it that these apparent discrepancies have arisen?

Joan Cooper, in a National Children's Bureau publication in 1978, put forward a number of possible reasons for this: More playgroups have opened; the 1970's saw the mushrooming of Women's Refuges throughout the country (giving shelter and help to vulnerable families who might otherwise have been received into care); Family support groups were set up, such as S.C.O.P.E., Homestart and many others; Education for parenthood developed more rapidly; and practitioners generally began to respond to research evidence of the importance of early intervention and preventive work. But just as important, I feel, is the increase in day care provisions for young children (primarily with childminders) and earlier reception into Nursery classes, albeit often on a part-time basis, thus providing the opportunity for women to work outside the home to relieve financial or social burdens, ease family or personal stress, or carry on with their career, particularly in the light of recent Equal Opportunities legislation.

Travelling around the country this past year it has been interesting to note how the day-care policies of so many local authorities specifically state that no infants or young children under the age of two years should be admitted to day nurseries unless there are exceptional reasons for this. Consequently, the role of both day nurseries and childminders has changed dramatically over the past few years.

In a situation where day nurseries may no longer accept infants and toddlers, where four-year olds are increasingly being admitted to nursery class before the age of compulsory education, and where admission to day nurseries is restricted primarily to children with serious behavioural, developmental or family difficulties, traditional "family group" nursery care is gradually being overtaken by the need for more intensive, planned work, often involving the whole family. Indeed, the re-designation of a number of day nurseries as family or nursery centres reflects these trends.

This means that the major responsibility for the day care of the nation's infants and toddlers, and for the part-time extended day care of children attending part-time nursery class, now rests primarily with childminding except in those areas where private nurseries or community nurseries are operating. In addition, firm evidence is emerging of the increasing use of childminding to undertake specific work with "special needs" children. (This will be discussed more fully further on in this report).

This trend towards greater "community responsibility" for the care of the young children parallels the trend in the care of older children. The past four or five years has seen a substantial growth in Fostering and Adoption and, in particular, special fostering schemes for "difficult to place" children (handicapped or emotionally disturbed children, adolescents and black children). We have also seen a growth in Intermediate Treatment where young delinquents or those "at risk" of coming before the Courts can be worked with in the community to avoid reception into residential care.

Many factors have operated to encourage these trends and the most powerful of these, of course, has been the present political and economic policies of Central Government where cuts in rate support grants and enforced reduction in local authority spending has resulted in capital programmes being cut or drastically curtailed, new developments halted and existing services restricted. So, this has had a direct impact on the search for cheaper alternatives to maintain a reasonable level of care. Hence, the closing down of a number of residential child care establishments and the expansion of more localised "community care" projects and day attendance centres.

At the same time there have been quite important changes in philosophy about child (and family) care resulting from increased knowledge about children's development in different situations - although we should very seriously question the way in which research findings based upon extremely limited studies tend to be accepted somewhat over-enthusiastically, often without validation, which has resulted in ever-changing "fashions" in child care!

The recent publication of the Barclay Report from the National Institute for Social Work (N.I.S.W.) appears to give further support for "community care" trends. Briefly, this report envisages the social worker of the future as more of a "co-ordinator" and "facilitator" rather than doing direct work with clients. It proposes that this work can best be undertaken by community resources or "volunteers", and emphasises the need for small family units of care and local community support - for example, in the care of the elderly, the mentally handicapped and children.

Yet, this report presents a further interesting paradox because it appears to be in direct opposition to the view of those social workers who are represented by the British Association of Social Work (B.A.S.W.) who are arguing for more "specialism", more direct involvement with specific client groups and less emphasis on the generic approach to social work since the Seebohm Report which resulted in the creation of Social Services Departments since 1970. Quite a fascinating dilemma - where one view emphasizes more community involvement and the other wants more social work involvement and specialisation.

Whatever view we hold, caution is absolutely crucial, because if we don't recognize the full implications of policies and practices, we may end up putting already vulnerable groups (particularly children) at even greater risk, by which time their difficulties may have become compounded. "Cheaper Care" is not necessarily the same as "Better care" - whether in the community or elsewhere. We must be careful not to confuse "quality" of care with "cost" of care. If society is to ask community groups to undertake the care of its most vulnerable members then consideration must be given to ensuring that they have adequate resources to do the job, otherwise, it must be prepared to face the inevitable consequences of much greater individual and family stress, even higher rates of family breakdown and increasing proportions of children likely to be received in local authority care - albeit at a later age, maybe, but with accumulated problems by that time.

Let us at this stage have a brief re-cap of some of these points to see where this line of argument is leading to in relation to Training and Support in Childminding:

- Childminding is now an established (and essential) part of the total Social Services child care system.

- We know there are proportionately fewer children under the age of five years in local authority care despite a rising population in that age group, largely due to more preventive work, support to young families and a wider use of community care (including childminding).

- Childminders care for at least three times more children than do day nurseries. These include the majority of youngest infants and children up to two years as well as a substantial proportion of "multiply disadvantaged" children.

- There have been dramatic changes in the development of childminding nationally with the event of a changing social, political and economic climate which has resulted in a greater use of childminding in order to carry through child care policies in many areas and has a strong potential for even further development.

- The outcome of this has been the highlighting of several different kinds of childminding situations.

It is this latter point that brings us directly to the consideration of Training and Support factors in childminding. For some time we have directed much of our attention to the varying needs of different kinds of childminders whose experience, motivation, willingness and range of skills differs considerably. Only recently have we really begun to look in any depth at the equally wide range of care situations, the range of functions the childminder is expected to perform and the ways in which parents, local authorities and others use childminders. This phenomenon is what was referred to earlier as the "changing face of childminding".

Childminding is no longer the simple, private arrangement made between two or more families where the wife in one family cares for the young children of neighbours wishing to return to work outside the home (even though in some areas this remains a major function and may still be carried out by childminders with differing training and support needs). Whereas in the past the primary emphasis was on providing safe and satisfactory "custodial" care and meeting the child's physical needs, now, our expectations of a good childminder will additionally include planning for and providing stimulating play activities and observing behaviour to meet the social, intellectual and emotional needs of the child, and acting as a supportive ally to parents and older children - often with a degree of therapeutic input. However, to do all these multiple tasks, this implies that the childminder has at her fingertips a range of skills to understand child development, is able to work effectively with parents - recalling her own feelings and experiences as a child and parent - is able to recognize childrens problems, knows how to seek and use the advice of her peers and various professionals, has access to a range of community provisions and can negotiate her way through a welter of legal, financial and other business transactions. All this, with minimal preparation, training or support.

Even with relatively stable and happy children and families these are pretty hefty demands. If we add to this the increasing use of childminders to care for particularly vulnerable families then our expectations of them are even greater. Certainly, a recent intensive, evaluative study of the childminding Subsidy Scheme of my own local authority highlighted some interesting examples of extremely complex family situations where day care with childminders was felt to be appropriate and subsequently used. This scheme involved approximately one-third of all registered childminders in the Borough.

Some of the reasons given for placements onto the subsidy scheme included: short-term "emergency" care; prevention of reception into care or rehabilitation of children back into the family's care; to "nurture" certain children; to stabilize previously erratic day-care patterns; to provide stimulation for children with various delays or handicaps; and to support many lone parents who needed help to overcome serious financial, housing or other social difficulties.

If we further consider that it is now fairly common for childminders to provide all-day care, or extended day care where parents return to work after a period of maternity leave, or to supplement the care of young children attending nursery school on a part-time basis, we begin to appreciate not only the demands being placed upon a substantial proportion of registered childminders involved in such specialist schemes but also the demands placed on "ordinary childminders" in their day-to-day work, where family life is itself undergoing such dramatic changes. It also implies that childminders are now being asked to undertake work for which professional child care workers would expect as of right to be adequately prepared for and remunerated.

Recent demographic trends have highlighted an increase in divorce rate and more recently, a lowering of the re-marriage rate, so more people are living alone with their children than ever before. Illegitimacy is also rising which means more single-parent families. Generally, we estimate that single-parent families account for about one-tenth of children, and that about one in four of all marriages are likely to break up eventually. The result of this is that other persons now undertake a more positive "substitution" parenting role as well as providing the wider family support and education that was once the major prerogative of the extended family network. This year's work has shown that childminding is definitely a major part of that wider family support network.

My own local authority (and many others too) has recognized the implications of such changes for both its wider preventive work with families and more specifically for training and support, has encouraged the development of the childminding service and has provided the necessary resources to do so. As a result a high degree of priority has been given to developing an extensive range of support services in the borough for childminders and parents, and training is just one of these.

Over the last two decades there has been a distinct "shift" in attitudes towards childminding training and this appears to have progressed through three distinct phases:

Phase 1:- The belief that no training was necessary for mothers who were already experienced in caring for their own children. Indeed, this may well be so where close friends, relatives or neighbours know the child intimately, but these are the minority of situations in registered childminding today.

Phase 2:- With the incorporation of childminding into Social Services range of responsibilities after 1970 and with the publication of a series of research and media publications suggesting that "horrific" dangers fell upon children left in the care of childminders, training for childminders was felt to be necessary. The second half of that decade saw the mushrooming of local authority training courses, primarily organized from a didactic teaching approach, where professional child care and health professionals were recruited to teach good child care practise. This approach encompassed the belief that people's long-held attitudes could be changed following a brief course of lectures over a period of 8 or 9 weeks! But at the same time some very interesting work was going on in childminders' support groups or drop-in centres even though occasionally this was shrouded by the felt need for a "control function" by professionals organizing some of these groups.

Phase 3:- We have now entered a much more dynamic and exciting phase where training is seen as one essential component of the total support system and is viewed very much from a "shared-care" perspective. This has been the result of a combination of factors:

( i) Changes in professional thinking and practise based upon successful examples in other areas of child care and family intervention research which emphasizes an interactive approach.

( ii) Newer, imaginative approaches in adult and community education and in the development of various parenting education programmes which incorporates outreach work and stresses the need for a two-way dialogue where the "consumers" themselves play a major role in defining their own training needs.

(iii) Ironically, cutbacks in local authority funding has resulted in the recognition of the cost effectiveness of more imaginative approaches to training. The earlier-mentioned changes in usage of childminders also precipitated this.

( iv) Pressures from within childminding itself, again by example - where childminders were beginning to demonstrate a resourcefulness and willingness to tackle training issues and press for better status and recognition of their work.

(  v) Increasing recognition too by some local authority childminding workers that they themselves lacked some of the "special" skills necessary for this kind of work (a factor which was one of the most interesting to emerge from this study) and were prepared to involve others in group development, individual support and training as well as actively seeking support for themselves. Other childminding workers with less of a need for this support were nevertheless still able to stand back a little from their "training" role and allow minders a considerable degree of autonomy in the organisation of groups and act more as group participants or "facilitators".

It would be misleading to suggest that this has been a smooth progression through each phase - quite the reverse situation in fact. A minority of authorities are still stuck in phase one, whilst a considerably larger proportion adhere to the formal "teaching model" and other areas are still struggling to define their training and support needs in the face of considerable economic shortcomings, social and environmental pressures and general lack of resources and support.

Nevertheless, the Phase three approach appears to be steadily gaining ground and it is from this perspective that I began to work on the development of a new "model" for childminding and support which was presented to the N.C.M.A. conference on Training at Birmingham in March 1981 in its very raw form despite two years fairly intensive work even to reach that point.

At that meeting some of the above evidence in support of a new approach to training was put forward as well as some considerable criticism of the way in which some of the earlier formal courses had been designed and presented. Analysis of a number of these courses showed them to be extremely limited in content; bore little relationship to caring for children in a home setting; rested primarily on the definition by professionals of the training needs of the childminders (occasionally by Principal Officers and other Senior Staff with little reference even to childminding workers!); undermined the experience of adult caregivers and their ability to evaluate their own skills; used unsuitable training methods and materials; and almost totally ignored the parents as a crucial part of the childminding relationship. Is it any wonder why the response by childminders was so poor? Unfortunately, this had the effect of labelling them as "apathetic" when they showed their rejection with their feet, despite some excellent examples in some areas of maximum take-up and/or further progression to more advanced courses or alternative training situations following feedback and modification of programmes.

None of these earlier criticisms are retracted here although it is important to stress that lessons have been learned from these earlier mistakes (albeit the hard way) and that the future for training now seems much more hopeful. What is essential is that we recognize the implicit assumptions held during that period - the notion that there is a clearly definable "standard" of child care; that this is best "taught" by professionals who "know" what the problems are; and that teaching is a one-way process, with a relatively passive audience, whose long-held attitudes and child care practices can be permanently changed after a short course lasting only a few weeks. Unless we break away from these assumptions, childminding will never attain the standard or status that it so clearly wants.

The development of this training and support "model" rested upon a structured, research-orientated approach to first clearly defining a problem before seeking a solution, and then, having formulated some ideas or "hypotheses" about it, attempting to test out these ideas to see how valid they are and then modifying them where appropriate before proceeding to the next stage of development. So the whole thing is a fairly lengthy process at the end of which we should arrive at a workable solution to our original problem - in this case to find a useful framework or model which will encompass the training and support needs of different people, with different responsibilities and interests, in different childminding situations, yet from a perspective of sharing these responsibilities and interests. Quite a challenge!

The essential, preliminary work included:

( i) A review of the literature and research on childminding, training needs and community-based intervention programmes with pre-school children, families and childminders - in this country and abroad.

( ii) An examination of a number of childminding courses carried out between 1979 and 1980.

(iii) A working group of London childminders was set up to look in depth at two of the Open University "Family Life" series course materials (P.911 and P.912). Their comments on the usefulness or otherwise of this material was recorded, as was their additional recommendations for childminding training.

( iv) A workshop comprising representatives from childminders groups, local authority workers, the N.C.M.A., the Open University and researchers, was set up to examine a number of training issues and assess the feasability of developing learning materials for childminding.

( v) An intensive analysis was undertaken of file records of visits to childminders by childminding workers and a number of problem areas were isolated.

( vi) The N.C.M.A. Working Party Report on Training, which lists three examples of courses for childminders at different levels and gives a wide variety of courses from Local Authorities/Further

Education Colleges was examined. This was followed by the N.C.M.A. Conference on Training in Birmingham, 1981.

(vii) Other discussions took place with various professional and voluntary bodies and childminders' groups on the need for/and content of childminding training courses or programmes.

It was necessary too at a very early stage in the process to clarify the Aims and Objectives of this project and, in particular, any resource materials which would be subsequently produced. The N.C.M.A's Working Party on Training listed among its aims items which could form the basis for the development of specific objectives where it stressed the importance of:

( i) Enhancing the status and public image of childminding.

( ii) Raising the standards of support given to childminders and, through this, the quality of care provided by childminders.

More specific objectives were defined later by a joint steering group set up to pursue the development of training materials:

( i) To develop a model for training and support which will enable childminders and child care workers to identify the needs of parents and children with whom they are in contact - recognizing the variations produced by geographical, cultural and ethnic differences.

( ii) To encourage the development of the relationship between parents and childminders by highlighting and recognizing the areas of difficulty they experience.

(iii) To enable childminders to see themselves as a significant part of the child care system.

( iv) To identify the ways in which childminders, parents and child care workers can encourage maximal development in the children in a secure environment.

( v) To enable childminders, parents and child care workers to be aware of the amenities, resources and information available to them.

( vi) To encourage childminders to develop their own child care interests and skills in producing an activity oriented environment for the children they care for.

(vii) To encourage the parents of minded children to develop their skill in settling-in children into the minding situation and to support parents during this period.

Consideration also had to be given to a number of other factors: The information and skills required was clearly going to vary considerably in terms of level of difficulty because of the diverse range of experiences and backgrounds. Consequently, the idea of providing materials at different "depths of understanding" was fundamentally important in the initial design stages. Similarly, it was regarded as essential to offer a flexible "package" which would enable people to take up issues or topics of concern to them at particular times as well as building up further skills when these were thought to be necessary. Bearing in mind too that training and support sessions took place in a variety of settings, there had to additionally be sufficient choice and flexibility to suit both formal and informal courses, small group discussions or one-to-one support sessions.

Implicit in this approach was the recognition of the value of experiential learning and active participation, the need to provide a range of stimulating topics and materials which reflects the interests of adult care givers (some of whom may already have considerable experience as parents), in a family day care setting - and not simply ad hoc adaptations of N.N.E.B. or P.P.A. training courses or parentcraft classes for new parents! So we attempted to move away from a "subject orientated approach" where one selects a particular subject and proceeds to develop a training session around it. Instead, the preference was for a mainly "issues orientated approach" where emphasis is placed on discussing relevant issues and underlying reasons for the things people do, or the beliefs they hold which affects their attitudes to/and relationships with others.

Perhaps an example here might clarify this point. Let us take, for example, the subject of "Diet". Instead of restricting the discussion to preparing nourishing meals for children or examining the vitamin and mineral content of food, say, from a dieticians point of view, the "issues approach" would concentrate more on some of the wider issues surrounding food, such as the meanings associated with different eating patterns or child-rearing practices, possibly with reference to different households, and cultural or religious backgrounds, but also relating this specifically to experiences in childminding situations, particularly where difficulties had been experienced over food, either with a child or parents, and where understanding, attitudes or expectations were unclear or relationships were being affected.

There are numerous other such issues. For example, an analysis of records of visits to childminders in one area over a period of 12 months highlighted 124 different issues that were discussed on home visits by one childminding worker alone. Many of these would have made excellent topics for training courses or group discussions yet were rarely seen in the earlier formal training programmes, although many of these were subsequently incorporated into the Mark I version of the new training and support model which itself offered a total of 234 different topics or "issues".

This type of approach is a much more dynamic, fruitful and satisfying one for adult learning situations and one which encourages maximum participation by drawing upon personal experiences. It also reflects the view that education (and training) is an ongoing learning process, where all the time one is learning, developing, and adapting through increasing knowledge gained through experience and interaction with other people. Yet it does not deny the opportunity to gain specific new skills as the provision of stimulating, attractive and well-structured materials is a crucial part of the total process, just as is the need for support and guidance from group leaders or "tutors" to encourage the best use of the materials to gain most impact. Indeed, the questions "Who are the trainers?" and "Who trains them?" are key ones in this whole debate about training and support in childminding and have received considerable attention during the discussions which have taken place nationally this year.

Neither does it deny the need for a sound information base because built into this model are topics dealing specifically with information about a wide range of social, community, educational and media resources; practical information to enable childminders to get on with their job and avoid unnecessary friction over legal matters, money, insurance or organisation etc.; adequate references to follow-up literature or sources of further information on specific areas of interest; as well as guidance on the setting up of practical workshops, training programmes, and the monitoring and evaluation of training programmes and group work.

This was the stage we had reached by early 1981. A preliminary "model" for childminding training and support had been developed which contained:

- A "common core" dealing with mainly childminding organisational matters.
- 12 modules on specific broad areas of interest - each with 3 levels (or "depths of understanding")
- 6 topics within each level of each module - giving a total of 234 different topics, many of which were based upon particular "issues" raised from within childminding.

As the average college-based childminding course tends to run over a period of 10-13 weeks, this framework offers a sufficiently wide variety of modules to enable a full course to be undertaken across the whole spectrum of areas if that is what is required.

However, by adopting a "topic based approach" an even greater degree of flexibility is available for a course leader to choose from a range of possible alternatives which include:

- A full course, using topics from modules at the same level
- Single modules over all three levels, used consecutively, as short courses.
- Isolated topics, for individual interest or group discussions
- Selected topics or modules in a mixture of different levels, depending on the interest shown and/or depth of understanding required.

It is this ability to go up and down or across the range of topics, as well as the built in flexibility of this particular model to suit so many different kinds of training situations, that seemed to appeal to people within childminding when it was first presented in its earliest form. The response to these proposals was quite overwhelming during the weeks immediately following the Birmingham Conference with requests for further information coming from childminders and child care workers in various parts of the country, clearly indicating that there was an untapped area of need for childminding resources which had previously been unrecognized.

As a result, it was decided to follow-up the Birmingham Conference with a series of small, informal seminar/discussion groups in some of the regions to obtain first-hand "feedback" on some of the ideas put forward. Well, that was the original plan. What actually developed was a national programme, with N.C.M.A. backing, over a full year of a variety of discussions, meetings, seminars, study days, and even full-blown conferences in two regions - reflecting the degree of interest and the particular stage of development of different areas of the country which affected the format, size, structure, content and degree of formality of these meetings. More than one meeting took place in some regions.

The following sections in this report deal more specifically with the past year's work.

## PART II REGIONAL MEETINGS ON TRAINING AND SUPPORT

### August 1981 - July 1982

### 1. Objectives

The purpose of these meetings was five-fold:

( i) To extend the discussion on training and support to regional groups in order to obtain a much clearer picture of geographical variations.

( ii) To familiarise interested persons with the proposed "model" and obtain feedback from them on their views of the range of modules and topics suggested, and the relevance of these for local needs, isolating where possible, broad "priority" areas.

(iii) To create an environment which would positively encourage interest in/debate on training and support issues within a "shared-care" framework.

( iv) To begin to build up (with the assistance of the N.C.M.A.) a regional network through which ideas and materials could eventually be disseminated, tested out, and subsequently evaluated.

( v) To obtain a more holistic understanding of the training and support situation in childminding generally, to aid in the preparation of a text on the subject.

### 2. Organisation of the Meetings

As the previous section has already indicated, the series of regional meetings took a somewhat different form to that originally anticipated. Once the initial idea had been put forward it soon became clear that a considerable degree of flexibility was going to be necessary in order to respond to the needs of different regions, and indeed, different stages of development within each region too. This in itself was the first major finding from this study. That whereas training and support had reached a fairly sophisticated level in some areas and participants at the meetings were ready to debate a number of specific issues that had arisen from their past experiences in this, others were still at the stage where they needed the opportunity for a more open discussion to share basic ideas and information, and assistance in clarifying the direction in which they might go.

The whole thrust of this project was that it should be a shared venture - to break down any barriers to communication between the various partners in the childminding arrangement, where they existed, and encourage an open two-way dialogue about training and support. In order to do this effectively, the emphasis was placed upon having "link persons" in each of the regions from Childminders and Social Services to jointly undertake the local planning, organisation, fund-raising and recruitment of helpers - liaising with the N.C.M.A. and myself, centrally.

On the whole it worked well. It appears that this might be a workable model for future regional developments of this kind. Naturally, there were a few "hiccups" in the system. The degree of responsibility occasionally varied between the partners depending upon their organisational skills and time available to do the work; the protracted illness of one major link-person almost resulted in a cancellation of one meeting - but this was rescued at the last minute and managed to struggle through despite being bedevilled with further problems such as poor attendance and the breakdown of the cine projector which necessitated several last minute programme changes; the appalling winter weather earlier in the year also resulted in a quick re-shuffling of dates and venues which meant that although little activity took place between January and March, the months of April to June was extremely hectic with between two and four meetings being held each month; and another major oversight on our part was to organize the first north-west meeting during Wakes Week! Fortunately, a further meeting was held in the north west some months later.

However, the majority of meetings were superbly organized by the Regions, very well attended, full of discussion and the sharing of ideas and information, and with maximum involvement by most people present. In particular, the support offered by several Social Services and Education Departments was very impressive in some regions where premises were found free of charge and administrative assistance and expertise provided. In some areas, joint working groups or panels were set up involving childminding groups, N.C.M.A. regional representatives, Social Services, Adult or Further Education and representatives from other under-fives sectors - to clarify their local objectives, arrange the organisation and allocate specific tasks. This was particularly important for some of the larger meetings and conferences.

## 3. Attendance

Attendance at these meetings was not confined to childminders, social workers and parents even though these formed the majority present. Additionally, representatives came from Voluntary Organisations and Specialist Child Care Agencies, Adult and Further Education, Research Workers, Community Groups, Playgroups, Local Politicians and Senior Local Government Officers, Paediatricians and General Practitioners, Health Visitors, various other under-fives groups, the legal profession, local business people and representatives from national companies. The varied attendance at some meetings led us to the second major finding from this study, that the interest in training and support in childminding extends far wider than the actual participants - certainly wider than we had originally anticipated. For example, in one instance it was fascinating to observe an intensive debate on the pros and cons of community care between a Chairman of a Social Services Committee, his senior officers and "grass-roots" workers, other local authority workers, childminders and parents, a day nursery matron and an adult education expert. Democracy indeed - with childminders having a fair crack of the whip in the discussion!

A total of approximately 1,300 people attended the 15 meetings, ranging from 24 - 170 at each meeting, with an average attendance of 87.

## 4. Format of Meetings

All meetings took place on Saturdays to enable working childminders to attend free from the responsibility of minded children. It was originally believed that this might deter some professionals from attending but generally proved not to be the case. Their contribution was most enthusiastic and the majority attended without the expectation of reimbursement of expenses, as did childminders and others.

Some were whole-day meetings, lasting from 9 or 10 a.m. - 4 or 5 p.m., whilst others were shorter half-day sessions from approximately 1 - 5pm depending upon availability of accommodation and helpers available, the distances to be travelled as well as local needs. The distances that some people were prepared to travel on very difficult journeys was surprising, particularly those who came from rural areas such as the Highlands of Scotland for the conference in Glasgow and from outlying villages for the meetings in East Anglia, the Midlands and South Wales.

All programmes included ample opportunity for small group discussions - sometimes on specific topics, sometimes for open discussion. Group sizes were usually restricted to about 10-15 people to ensure maximum involvement although a few were larger than this. It was estimated that a total of 80 hours talking took place in these small group discussions in addition to the formal speakers, introductions by organisers and regional/national representatives, subsequent plenary feedback sessions panels and ongoing discussions throughout the day. Each small group had a group leader to lead and co-ordinate the group and a note-taker to record the key points arising from the discussions. In addition other people were recording throughout the day with taped or written recordings. Where specific topics were selected these were usually chosen following discussions with link persons and/or other representatives from the regions. Some meetings had as few as two or three discussion groups, whilst at the other end of the spectrum, the Scotland conference for example had 6 groups in each of the morning and afternoon sessions - a total of 12 groups in all which produced a wealth of interesting ideas and factual information.

## 5. Finance

With the exception of the conference in Scotland which received formal regional financial backing from the N.C.M.A. the aim was for all others to be self-financing as no grant had been available for this project. At the same time it was regarded as crucial that attendance charges be kept as low as possible so as not to deter attendance by childminders and others on limited budgets or with long journeys. This meant that the regional organisers had to be extremely resourceful in attracting local funds, voluntary help or other resources free of charge, or organising fund-raising events on the day. It is to their credit that they were able to keep the average cost of attendance down to between 50p and £1.00 in most cases and two meetings were offered free of charge. Two other meetings did end up with a small debit which was covered by the N.C.M.A. who also met the cost of attendance by members of their executive committee. At the end of the year there was a final shortfall of project expenses of about £65.00 in addition to the cost of printing the report, but it is hoped that sales of this report will eventually put the project's finances back onto an even keel. It has certainly been a useful exercise on resourcefulness.

In most cases refreshments available were confined to liberal supplies of tea, coffee and light snacks - provided by either childminding groups or financed by the Social Services or Education Departments involved. Generally, members were invited to bring packed lunches which added to the informality and encouraged the continuation of group discussions through the lunch breaks. One particularly (pungent) memory is of the London meeting where a dozen or so people at the Mitford Under-fives Centre continued their debate over bags of fish and chips! On the other hand, three local authorities provided meals at lunchtime - free of charge in one case.

## 6. Analysis of the recorded information

### (a) Method of Analysis

As indicated earlier, the majority of data was in the forms of notes and scripts from recordings. The subsequent analysis of this was done in several stages:

( i) A detailed listing of all issues and topics raised during the discussions.

( ii) Categorizing these issues/topics into a number of broad, major "themes".

(iii) Undertaking a frequency count of the number of times each issue/topic was raised in discussions, to get some indication of their relative degree of priority, first over the whole country and then in each region - to look for any regional differences.

( iv) Selecting out examples of different kinds of projects or childminding schemes where training and support appeared to be a major consideration.

( v) Looking further at specific examples of training programmes, individual courses or group work, and kinds of materials or resources used.

( vi) Surveying and re-organising the various categories of major themes and issues/topics, comparing them with the content of the original model (Mark I version), and finally re-organising and supplementing these, as necessary, to produce a revised model (Mark II).

### (b) Total issues and topics raised during the discussions

A detailed listing of all issues and topics raised during the discussions at the regional meetings showed that these totalled 255 across the country. When these were compared with the 234 topics included in the original model it was noted that 147 (63%) of these original topics cropped up at some time or other during the regional meetings although sometimes in a different context.

These 255 topics were enormously diverse and included practical issues, information and requests for assistance, extremely sensitive debates on a number of legal, philosophical and ethical issues and differences between professionals and non-professionals, numerous examples of projects, schemes, training programmes and group work activities, examination of relationships and feelings, and examination of social, cultural, and educational issues, etc. Sometimes the discussions were in considerable depth. At other times, issues were raised almost superficially with little subsequent take-up by others. However, the main point to bear in mind here is that the whole spectrum of concerns or issues in childminding, as evidenced by these discussions, is as wide as (if not wider than) that which one might expect to find in any other area of child care training and embraces learning from different perspectives and at different levels of need.

Appendix 1 at the back of the report gives examples of the issues raised in just two groups. One, an open discussion, and the other, a discussion around a selected topic.

(c) Categorization of the issues/topics into major "themes"

Having listed the total range of topics or issues arising from the discussions, the next task was to attempt to categorize them into broad themes, indicating particular priority areas which regularly arose throughout most regions. This stage in the analysis produced 17 "priority themes" which members at these meetings regularly raised as important areas for discussion:

( i) Recognition of different kinds of childminding and support needs:

- Comparisons between geographic areas (Inner Cities, Rural, Suburban/New estates, Small towns, High density Vs Low density, economic and social-mobility factors).
- Types of care. (Full time, part-time, extended day care, emergency or crisis care, intermittent or periodic care, ordinary Vs "specialist" care).
- Work loads of L.A. workers and effects on support to minders and parents.
- Social Policy/Political differences and effects on support provision; Organisational issues in Social Services; Centralisation versus Area based "patch" systems.
  Note: Rural childminding specifically received much attention in several regions.

( ii) Specialist Childminding Schemes

- Different kinds in operation (Subsidies; Sponsorship; Day fostering; Day-carers; Salaried Childminding schemes).
- Organisational and supervision problems.
- The role of voluntary organisation in such schemes.
- Differences in remuneration, recognition, resources and support features.

(iii) "Shared-care"

- Was this a myth or a reality?
- What shared-care meant; the roles and responsibilities of the partners;
- Wider responsibilities (eg. other agencies; community responsibilities).
- Issues of confidentiality, partnership, professionalism Vs non-professionalism, boundaries, control factors, negotiation and status.
- Supplementary Vs complementary care.
- Childminding as wider family support (eg care of older children; "mothering of the mothers").
- Relationship between childminding and other under-fives services.
- Concept of childminding "teams" and pros and cons of this
- Ways of encouraging greater parental participation in childminding

### ( iv) Groups

- Numerous examples of different kinds of childminding groups, their functions and organisation, financing, locations, membership and leadership.
- Different stages of development in relation to members needs and interests; maintaining interest/combatting disinterest.
- The role of the L.A. in group work; Self-help groups;
- How to set up new groups; Meeting the needs of individuals (non-groupies).
- The training and support function of groups specifically.
- Closed versus Open groups; Penetration of groups by new members and associated problems.
- N.C.M.A. Development officers role in group development/ regional development.

### ( v) Information and Publicity

- Local and national examples; Advertising; use of media (local and national radio/T.V./Press); Initiatives undertaken and results of these.
- The role of the N.C.M.A. Information Officer; Need for localized information officers.
- Educating the public about childminding to improve its status.
- Detrimental effects on morale of negative publicity.
- Use of the media for training purposes (Eg. reaching unregistered minders; distance learning for isolated childminders; information for parents).
- Newsletters; local publications.

### ( vi) Training Courses and Programmes

- Many examples given of courses undertaken, planned, currently in operation, their organisation, structure and content.
- Facilities used and agencies/professionals involved; How to utilize local resources.
- Training and support needs of different people in childminding
- Training on a shoestring budget. Who funds training programme?
- Separate training for childminding Vs co-ordinated approaches with other under-fives groups.
- In-service training specifically for professionals working with childminders.
- How to plan courses; who should be involved; Role of experienced childminders in training (in groups; on courses; as neighbourhood visitors).
- Kinds of presentation; materials and resources available or wanted; visual aids; relevance of materials for childminding.
- Different approaches to training; different levels and needs; What does training give?

### (vii) Monitoring and Evaluation

- Of groups, training programmes, and professional work. Who does it, how and why?; Evaluation for different purposes.

- Influencing the "policy makers" specifically.
- Research in childminding; Examples; its relevance; contribution by childminding itself; effects of research on practise and policy; Emphasis on negative aspects of childminding of earlier research.
- Partnership between researchers and childminding.
- Role of N.C.M.A. as "co-ordinator" of research, monitoring and evaluation in childminding and liaison with regions and researchers.

(viii) Training the Trainers

- Who are they?; Different people currently involved as trainers, group leaders, organisers, co-ordinators or facilitators; Are they interchangeable?
- Role of Adult Education, Further Education and Higher Education in childminding training.
- The various roles or functions of the trainers; How can these be taught?

( ix) The "Business" of Childminding

- Numerous essential practical issues (Common-core matters) and guidelines/information/advice needed, E.g. Legislation; Tax and insurances; Record keeping; Finance; Benefits; Planning matters; Budgetting and Funding.
- Day-to-day difficulties and how to resolve these; Decision making.
- National and Local requirements and responsibilities - related to different kinds of childminding.
- Sickness/Emergency cover; Priorities; Bulk-buy schemes and equipment purchase and loans; Contracts; Toy libraries; Local groups and drop-ins.
- National, regional and local organisation, affiliation, resources, etc.
- Economics of childminding and comparison with other forms of day care.
- How to make applications for funding or aid from L.A's or charities.

( x) "Illegal" Childminding

- Concern re: unregistered childminders; unsatisfactory legislation; How to combat it in different areas.
- Supply and demand factors (e.g. Effects of unemployment in increasing childminding; local geographical and social factors; equal opportunities legislation).
- Effects of publicity/recruitment campaigns - and different attitudes of L.A's in this and in interpretation of legislation.
- Will a national training programme reach unregistered minders or parents who use them?
- Examples of dual standards and ambiguous attitudes of some L.A.'s towards illegal childminding and registration responsibilities.

- Prosecutions for illegal childminding - should this be enforced more often?
- Ways in which illegal childminding colours the image of childminding generally.

### ( xi) Childminding as a "Career"

- Why people choose to mind other people's children; Concept of "choice" - how real is it?; Reasons for childminding; Reasons why people cease to mind.
- Linking in with the concept of their own and family "life-cycle" and womens' role in society.
- Changing attitudes to childminding as a career; comparison with others in other forms of child-care or day care.
- Again, issues of status and recognition.
- Childminding and Fostering. Are they compatible? (Similarities and differences).
- The childminders' own needs, development and career prospects - linking in with training issues.
- Men in childminding - as husbands, minders, helpers; providers; "father-figures";
- Effects of unemployment on recruitment of men in childminding (examples of registration of men in their own right).
- Pin-money Vs earned-income aspects in childminding.
- Training at different stages in a childminders "career".

### (xii) Family needs/Family dynamics

- Numerous references to the needs of the childminders' own families and those of the parents; family dynamics and relationships/difficulties, etc., related to childminding and shared-care of children.
- Examples of work being done by child care workers with families.
- Counselling; Therapy.
- Different patterns of child rearing; cultural and ethnic differences; religion.
- Family disruption/mobility; Effects on children; Stability of care issues.
- Parental responsibilities and "rights"; Childrens "rights" - Are these compatible?
- Family support systems and networks.
- Issues of "stigma" and "labelling" of families; isolation of some families.
- Dysfunctional relationships within the family; Internal stresses and strains.
- Special needs of older children in the family and effects of several young children in the house on their needs; Jealousy; Personal possessions and personal space.
  Note: Cultural and Ethnic issues related to the family were raised repeatedly in some areas.

### (xiii) Relationships, Beliefs, Attitudes

- Again, numerous discussions and examples at each meeting of minor and major relationship difficulties; misunderstandings or unclear expectations; attitudinal differences etc., and how these were coped with.
- The role of the L.A. worker in resolving difficulties.
- Further examination of cultural, social, environmental differences in child care - particularly related to caring for children of ethnic minority groups
- Wider relationships with neighbours, community, authority figures etc.
- Communication issues (kinds of communication; channels of communication; communication breakdowns).
- Compatability/Incompatability between two families; Hostility; Empathy; Compromise.
- Importance of early settling-in period and "contracts"; Examples of "emotional bargaining"
- Attitudes to mothers working outside the home; ambiguous attitudes in childminding.
- Relationships between the various professional agencies and under-fives provisions.
- Personal relationships and feelings; expression of feelings;

### (xiv) Child Abuse/Non-Accidental Injury

- Different kinds of abuse; the role of the L.A. and other agencies (e.g. N.S.P.C.C.); child abuse procedures.
- Child abuse and childminding; Investigation of suspected cases of abuse and feelings at this time (Several examples given of parents and childminders investigated - not always proven though).
- Effects on relationships between minder, parents and L.A. worker/or Social worker, if involved.
- Concern about examples of childminders left to cope with these situations unsupported, and other cases where a child has been removed unnecessarily.
- Observation/detection; Reasons for "cause for concern"
- Different attitudes to child management; control factors; punishment etc.

### ( xv) Educational, Health and Community Services

- Creating and maintaining links between the various services; knowledge of local provisions and services (e.g. Schools, clinics, social and leisure services, under-fives services; usage of these services).
- The role of Health Visitors and Health and Safety Officers in childminding.
- Co-ordinated projects/schemes; participation in under-fives co-ordination groups.
- Many examples given of national and local services and projects, resources available, and how to make use of these in childminding.

- Frictions between services; duplication of services; uneconomic use of resources.
- Use of community services specifically for training and support in childminding.
- Educational experiences for young children; How to facilitate these.
- Role of Educational home visitors in childminding.
- Extended day-care (- crucial area of discussion in some areas where "stability" of long-term care of older children conflicts with accusations of "overminding").
- Attachment of childminders to Nursery Schools and Day Nurseries - many difficulties associated with this and examples of breakdown.
- Education for Parenthood generally; new approaches in this and links with childminding; Inappropriate topic materials or courses in several regions.

### (xvi) Self-help

- Independence - desired or enforced?
- Many examples of a "self-help" approach in the regions - yet for different reasons, E.G. - where independence is encouraged yet adequate back-up resources are provided Vs Self-help as a last resort in the face of total rejection by L.A's.
- Self-help as a cheaper way of maintaining current levels of service in the face of economic cut-backs and recent changes in policy.
- Where voluntary organisations offer support to childminding in some areas.
- Self-help in areas with low levels of social priority cases so not requiring much L.A. intervention where standards of care are already high.
- Areas where the self-help ethos developed historically in the 1970's prior to L.A. activity.
- For philosophical reasons and shift towards community care generally.
- Conversely, a few examples of discouraging self-help, where L.A's prefer to maintain a paternalistic or "policing role" and the emphasis is on the control of childminding.
  Note: Later sections in this report will give more specific examples of how "self-help" operates in some areas, the functions performed by independent groups, the kind of support offered by relevant local authorities or voluntary agencies, and the implications for training in these areas.

### (xvii) Child Development Issues

Numerous childminding issues and problems were raised which indicated, either directly or indirectly, a need to understand them in relation to various aspects of child development. It is not possible to list them all here although many of these have subsequently been included in the revision of the training model. Briefly, these revolved around temperamental difficulties, social behaviour problems, emotional distress, language, play and physical development, as well as concerns about possible delays or abnormalities.

These were generally discussed in relation to: particular incidences or situations; discrepancies between the parents and childminders child care practises or family life experiences; a need to understand developmental norms or boundaries; requests for help with handicapped children or others with special needs; concern about excessive fears, attention-seeking behaviour or settling-in problems; information on where to go to seek advice or reassurance; how to discuss concerns with parents, and so on.

It should be pointed out, however, that some excellent advice, explanations and examples of good practice was often forthcoming from within the group from both childminders and "professionals" present, demonstrating the value of this kind of informal training situation where experiences can be shared and support offered.

(d) Development in the regions

It is not until a national project such as this is undertaken that one can fully grasp the wide range of work already being done all over the country in childminding, the substantial differences in approaches and stages of development (both within and between regions), and the subsequent need to share information, ideas, resources, knowledge and expertise.

Generally, the only information widely available on interesting programmes or projects tends to be about local authority or joint projects, such as the Groveway salaried minders project or the joint Barnardos/Hackney scheme, which are publically launched and monitored over a period of time. Other innovations often remain unheard of outside their own areas except where an individual takes the initiative in publishing an account of the work (e.g. Sheila Shinman's account of the Bunbury Project). The majority of research into childminding in this country has largely ignored the development and evaluation of specific projects, especially where the emphasis is on "standards of care" using extremely narrow paradigms, unlike other countries such as Germany, France, Canada and the U.S.A. where some very interesting evaluative studies have been undertaken.

The next few pages of this report mentions just a few of the many different kinds of childminding activities which offer some form or other of childminding training and support to give an indication of the wide range of approaches currently being adopted. Some are the direct result of local authority policies or Urban Aid funding programmes. Others stem from joint initiatives undertaken with Voluntary Organisations. However, the vast majority of support activities comes from within childminding itself - where grass-roots childminding workers and/or N.C.M.A. regional representatives work together with childminders to develop groups and training programmes or undertake the essential one-to-one support of individuals. What has also become apparent during the year is that where support is not forthcoming from local authorities, the "self-help" ethos has become very much a reality where individual childminders who are "out on a limb" have been forced to adopt separatist approaches - not from choice but out of sheer desperation! The inevitable consequences of this, of course, is that the gap in understanding between the various partners becomes even wider.

( i) Southampton Childminders Association

The association is well advanced in training developments over a period of several years. There is very good liaison with the local authority, under-fives specialists and college tutors. The association has its own Training Co-ordinator (an experienced childminder) and takes the lead in the planning and undertaking of courses and group work. Other experienced childminders act as tutors and are paid through Adult Education. The emphasis is on resolving issues and problems as well as giving practical information.

( ii) Eastbourne Childminders Association

Another very active childminding association (almost 100% membership) which takes a lead in training and support. It has an interesting system of "link persons" in local areas who follow-up initial visits by social workers. These early contacts are regarded as extremely important for both recruitment and training. The association provides its own resources, library, equipment, etc., and is currently examining various kinds of course materials. At first there was no financial aid from the L.A. but this situation has improved. Members of the association are highly critical of the formal courses, lecturers and educational provisions offered. The emphasis here is on developing an awareness of the minders own capabilities and status from within the association.

(iii) Harlow, Essex (bordering London)

Harlow Childminding Association is almost totally "self-help" with no direct funding from Social Services. This association is dependent mainly upon Town Council grants (which have to be "matched" by the Association) and local community services. A worker has recently been appointed by Social Services (an ex-childminder) to undertake the registration and co-ordination of childminding. The association is well organized and very active. It operates various groups, latchkey schemes and after-school clubs in addition to childminding matters, training, social activities and a newsletter/information service. It is supported primarily by local community associations but at the regional meeting stressed the need for help to obtain funding and a paid co-ordinator, and information about similar self-help organisations. The recently appointed social services worker is giving priority to the preparation of information packs, clarifying crucial "access" issues to local community resources and effecting introductions, and generally liaising between childminders and social services.

( iv) London Borough of Waltham Forest

This is a good example of joint working between the local authority and the childminding association, where the local authority has a genuine professional and financial commitment to childminding and preventive work with its childminding subsidy scheme. It operates an area-based service with co-ordinators, drop-ins, toy-libraries, equipment loans and other resources provided locally. High priority is given to training and support with a sophisticated range of training options including pre-registration discussion groups, ongoing support group work, college courses, specialist training for childminders with "special needs" children, and seminar groups on topics of mutual interest from a shared-care/multidisciplinary aspect. Childminders are involved in consultations about policy and decision making and have a representative on the Under-fives Co-ordinative Consultancy Group. Childminding training in this borough is advancing very rapidly. The Childminders Association in Waltham Forest is very strong with over 200 members. It produces its own newsletter, holds regular meetings and has organized a discount scheme with a number of local shops. Co-operation between the Association and Social Services staff is excellent.

( v) Grove Way Project, Lambeth, London, S.E.1.

The Groveway Project is an example of one of the first major salaried childminders schemes, which has been well studied and documented. Briefly, it was set up under Urban Aid Funding (which runs out in 1984) and currently employs 18 childminders with approximately 60 children involved. Minders are paid a salary plus a set amount per child and additional expenses. There are two project workers who undertake fortnightly home visiting and the "matching" of minders and children, as well as having a supervisory and counselling role. Minders on this scheme are all N.A.L.G.O. members and are subject to local government conditions of employment. They also attend fortnightly support groups and evening training courses run by a College of Adult Education, where the main emphasis appears to be on child care/child development issues, observation of children, as well as some topics which the childminders themselves wish to introduce. Contact between these childminders and other local support groups is encouraged but as these salaried childminders are technically "employed" by the project there is some tendency for them to be regarded as an "elite" group - a problem which has emerged in other areas where similar special childminding schemes for small groups of minders have been set up. Parents pay a small contribution to the care of their children but there are exemptions in parental contribution for students and other categories with particular needs. Work with parents is an area yet to be fully developed. At present, with the closure of a few local day nurseries, the project is under some pressure to meet the needs of children who would normally be eligible for day nursery provision. As well as training courses and groups, salaried childminders have access to equipment, toy libraries and other practical support resources. Six monthly reviews of placements are undertaken with parents. Another highly-intensive scheme in London is the "Shared Care" day-fostering scheme run jointly by Barnardos and the London Borough of Hackney, which offers a similar depth of support to a small group of selected and trained childminders caring for children with special needs, but this has not been without its problems and drop-out rates are high.

( vi) The Mitford Centre, Islington

A local, community-based centre originally set up about 8 years ago when L.A. funding for under-fives projects was more easily obtainable. Historically, it was on L.C.C. day nursery going back to the days when provisions were needed for wartime working mothers. The premises were handed over to the L.A. when no longer required for a day nursery. The centre provides facilities for a play group and local childminders. Training courses, with creche facilities, were put on in the earlier period although the current emphasis is more on an informal childminders support group work. Additional Urban Aid funding was also obtained in the past. Now, with L.A. financial cutbacks, the centre has evolved into a self-supporting, voluntary "co-operative" group, with a co-ordinator (an experienced childminder) working closely with the Area Social Worker and undertaking some one-to-one visiting and support work. The Centre has its own management group of childminders, parents and centre workers and great effort and ingenuity has gone into fund-raising to keep it going, with money obtained from the G.L.C., from radio and T.V. "Telethon" and "Help a London Child" appeals, as well as childminding fund-raising events. Under-fives provisions in Islington (an area of considerable social disadvantage and stress) is exceptionally good and the Mitford Centre is a unique example of a well-established, independent community resource for childminders which has grown with confidence over a long period of development.

(vii) Manchester Childminding Project

This project was set up in 1976 with joint Inner City Funding/ Save the Children Fund involvement, to give support and practical help to childminders in the centre of Manchester. This project has now been integrated into the newly opened Trinity House Family Centre - a combined multi-cultural nursery centre for children and families, incorporating day care, nursery schooling, after school clubs and holiday play-schemes as well as continuing with childminding support. The project operates several local drop-ins for minders in Manchester, provides staff to do one-to-one support work and home-visiting, as well as equipment and toy libraries etc. A high priority is given to training and refresher courses. Staff from a College of Further Education work closely with Social Services, Centre Staff and childminders to provide a range of training programmes involving both outreach work and formal courses. Local groups and parents are encouraged to play an active role in the Centre's Management Group. Regular newsletters, information and advice on community facilities comes from the Centre and from the Greater Manchester Play Resource Unit.

(viii) Bracknell Childrens Centre, Berks

This is another example of successful joint working between statutory and voluntary agencies. This National Childrens Home project is located in purpose built accommodation in the middle of a busy community shopping centre on a large estate. It offers maximal involvement and support to a wide range of local groups and has a co-ordinating function. The Centre staff work very closely with L.A. workers and other professionals as well as local people and childminders. It was described by one local social worker as a "Centre of excellence". Shared use of resources is encouraged with childminders using the toy library specifically set up for handicapped children, and there are superb facilities for play and discussion groups. Childminding training and support, with their positive involvement, has a high priority. Courses as the Centre are very successful, are jointly funded, and are mainly based around workshops and discussion groups where the value of sharing problems and working together is emphasized. A minibus transports childminders and children to and from the Centre from different areas on different days. Users of the Centre are very much involved in its planning and organisation of activities and courses, with regular revisions and modifications of ideas.

( ix) Boothtown and Astley Childminding Group (North West Region)

This group was selected as being typical of so many very small, relatively independent childminding groups which operate all over the country where the emphasis is on group self-support and development and social contact. Because the closeness of this small community offers ample opportunity for day-to-day contact, group meetings are held only once-monthly, during the evenings. The focus of this small group of 10 childminders is very much "job-orientated", so fund-raising, sharing or loaning of essential equipment, covering for each other in sickness and emergencies are primary group tasks, as well as organising social events for members and children. Babies are taken to clinics together and, simiarly, older children attend play-school. Informal training is ongoing where problems are discussed at meetings or where outside people are invited in to explore specific areas of interest. Group members additionally attend formal courses put on by the local authority. The B.B.C.2 television programme "Grapevine" last year sent a crew to spend the day with the childminders group and a programme subsequently went out on the national network as a result of the visit.

( x) Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council's recent child care policy changes has resulted in the setting-up of family centres in several parts of the county with drop-in and support facilities for childminders as an integral part of the centres' provisions. The co-ordinator at each centre is seen as the "catalyst" to stimulate ideas and developments in all areas of family work. Good relationships appear to exist between childminders and social services staff with a L.A. commitment to develop community resources and use childminders to care for "special needs" children (supported by the family centres) and the provision of special training courses. This is an example of the acknowledgement of the full integration of childminding into the total child-care system from a community care perspective.

( xi) Darlington Childrens Centre

On the surface, the Darlington Children's Centre appears to be simply a room with facilities for children in the Arts Centre Building in Darlington. But, in effect, it is much more than just that. The Centre is an umbrella organisation set up to assist and promote the work of groups in Darlington concerned with the health, welfare and rights of children. The large, spacious and well equipped room is used by children of parents taking courses in the Centre, by playgroups and the local Darlington Childminders Group for their fortnightly drop-in as well as other organisations and societies connected with children. This is a very interesting example of a co-ordinated approach to child welfare as well as meeting the support needs of individual groups. An excellent joint newsletter is regularly produced by a joint editorial board with members from Nursery Education, Health and Education and Childminding, and is packed full of interesting information about local facilities and groups, advice, ideas for play, educational and domestic/social activities, and specific help and information for childminders - liberally sprinkled with attractive photographs and drawings. It also examines attitudes to particular beliefs and child-care practices, therefore, is a good example of an interesting and highly relevant literary medium for training. Darlington Childminders Group also organizes its own training programme with evening meetings to supplement the daytime drop-in centre contacts.

### (xii) Childminding Training in Newcastle upon Tyne

A brief mention is made here of the childminding training programme in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in particular the 1982 Childminder Course - a formal programme of meetings held weekly in the Civic Centre over a period of 13 weeks. It is a good example of a wide-ranging coverage of highly relevant topics with involvement by both "experts" (paediatrician, psychologist, educationalists, etc.) and childminders and advisers. In fact, the series of meetings is chaired and led by a Newcastle childminder with additional involvement by members of the Childminders Committee. Because of its content and the range of personnel involved, the standard of delivery (and reception) should be high. This kind of course demonstrates that formal courses need not always appear alienating to childminders where they are positively involved.

### (xiii) Nottingham City Council

The City Council employs "support workers" (not social workers) for childminding as a part of its Inner City Programme. This scheme was originally funded by Urban Aid but was subsequently continued by the City Council. It was felt that there were certain benefits in having a childminding support system outside social work services. Support Workers go into people's homes more as personal friends and so avoid any appearance of local authority direction or control by not undertaking the statutory registrations etc. Concern here is for the childminder on her own who, for various reasons, may not want to be involved in groups. Thus, this is primarily a one-to-one support system.

### (xiv) Childminding in Yorkshire

Childminding in Yorkshire highlighted more than anywhere else visited the diversity of childminding situations and the need for ingenuity and flexibility on the part of both social workers and childminders in meeting support needs. The comparison between just three of the areas represented at the meeting demonstrates this nicely.

**Leeds**:- a city with acute inner-city problems and where childminders have to cope with children from a wide variety of ethnic backgrouns including Chinese, Asian, Caribbean and other cultures whose backgrounds and traditions are so different from traditional Northern family life-styles so a substantial emphasis in training and support work needs to be on coping with ethnic/cultural issues, different family patterns and expectations and child abuse concerns, often in an immediate response situation, as well as ongoing group and individual support work. A highly intensive level of work.

**Sheffield**:- Each area in Sheffield takes a different approach to childminding support, with different levels of priority, because it has a unique mixture of both city and countryside areas. However, training in Sheffield is well developed, is relevant to different peoples needs and very flexible. Two features of this bear mentioning. First, the series of slides made on various topics about their own minders and children and using a local woman to narrate. By using familiar scenes, events and language these are so much more acceptable and have proven to be highly successful. (They are available on loan to other groups). Secondly, a series of little information booklets has been produced and, more important, distributed in places where people are more likely to go!

**Kirklees**:- Kirklees is an area where childminders may be very isolated and experience considerable difficulty in getting to meetings or groups. Major difficulties are faced in rural Yorkshire over geographical dispersion and transport problems, so it is always of concern how to overcome these inexpensively. Nevertheless, Kirklees has managed to come to grips with some of these problems and social services attitude to training and support is exceptionally good. A minibus operates a regular service to get childminders to a centre with ideal creche and meeting facilities. In addition, other meetings are held in small geographical areas. A range of training facilities are available, including pre-registration discussion groups. All courses are evaluated throughout yet are informal, flexible and well attended. Childminders are very much involved in the planning of these and social workers take a low-profile, whilst at the same time acting as facilitators and co-ordinators.

### ( xv) Day Carers in Scotland

It was interesting to note that two major regions in Scotland (Lothian and Strathclyde) both operate "day-carer" schemes, with slight differences in orientation between the two regions. In Lothian, a clear distinction is made between day-carers and childminders: (a) Financially - as day carers are paid a "maintenance allowance" of 85% of the fostering rate for an average day, (b) in the different degree and level of parental contact, and (c) in the back-up support received from social work services - where day carers and social workers work much more closely together to help families in trouble and each child has a social worker. Thus, day-caring in Lothian is an intensive, individualised care situation. Some day-carers are especially recruited and others come from earlier childminding. All attend regular meetings in day nurseries or schools and undertake intensive training courses, with evidence too of close working with other agencies and child care groups. Strathclyde also operates a day-carer scheme but acknowledges the dual role and will pay for day care with both childminders and day-carers in priority areas of Glasgow, where the emphasis is on integrating "special needs" children into ordinary families in the local community. There are similarities between these two day-carer schemes and some subsidy/sponsorship schemes or day fostering in various parts of England. The main differences in the Scottish experience being the re-definition of the name of childminder to day-carer, the intensive social work support and the concept of "family care units" within the community.

(e) Key issues and problems arising in the Regions

Southern Region

- Highlighted the need for in-service training of childminding workers/social workers themselves in under-fives and childminding work.
- Regular regional conferences and study days are organised and training generally is at an advanced level, but the search for appropriate resources and training materials continues.

London Region

- Extremely wide variations between the London Boroughs in policy, organisation, facilities available, communication with childminding groups and attitudes to "partnership" and "independence"
- Fewer examples of "self help" in London than in the provinces. Where it was seen, it tended to be as a last-resort measure. Morale was low in some areas but there is also evidence of excellent co-working relationships in others.
- The emphasis on "Training of Childminders" is currently strong in London, although it was agreed that the future emphasis should be on "training together". (Eg. a joint course run by the London University Extramural Department for Minders and L.A. workers).
- The London Boroughs Training Committee offers childminding training courses (primarily for L.A. workers) but the orientation and balance of these was questioned. Not sufficiently consumer-orientated.
- Two major regional support groups now operate in the London region. The London Boroughs Childminding Workers Group (primarily for social services workers) and The London Region Childminding Association (primarily for childminders). Will these reinforce apparently diverging views?

North West Region

- With the strong tradition of day nursery provision in the North West, outside of the priority "inner-city" areas childminding has tended to attract lesser attention. Consequently, considerable developments have taken place within childminding itself to develop active local associations, groups and self-help schemes. The North-West Region Childminding Association is strong with a loyal and active membership.
- Training in the North-West (like many other Regions) is still very "patchy", with considerable advances in some areas but

less in others. Definitely moving forward though and coming to grips with the need for different kinds of training. Regional conferences and study days are held which attract large numbers and preliminary introductory courses have been held in most areas.

- There was an almost total rejection by minders of the use of day nurseries for their training and support.
- North-west meetings highlighted a wide range of information and training needs. Resources at both basic and advanced levels were needed, particularly relevant to caring for children in multi-cultural areas of larger towns and cities.

Beds/Berks/Bucks/Herts/Oxford area

- Training and support offered across this area was fairly evenly spread with most L.A's having an interest in it and making some provisions, with a few exceptions (Eg. One social worker reported having to undertake group work during the evenings in her own time and at her own expense due to lack of support and resources. Childminders in the same county were desperately trying to get some L.A. help).
- A high degree of commitment was evident from the discussions on shared responsibilities. Social workers willing to re-examine their role and seek more positive involvement with/and by parents and childminders.
- Major concerns here included: how to influence policy-makers and the avoidance of "high-powered" lecture situations and irrelevant training courses.

Eastern Region

The Eastern Region meeting highlighted nicely the specific problems of childminding in rural areas. Although provisions caried from one county to another, many common themes and needs arose:

- Access difficulties due to isolation, poor transport facilities, lack of meeting places.
- Outreach play people/play buses are crucial for outlying areas, but also with facilities for support and counselling for parents and minders.
- Emphasis is inevitably on "outreach learning". Correspondence courses/O.U. courses had been tried and needs building upon with more appropriate materials for childminding.
- Resource and information packs were desirable plus literature specifically geared to childminding.
- Supply and demand factors are even more important in rural areas.
- Heavy case-loads, long distances to cover and limited resources places social workers at distinct disadvantage outside towns. Can other professional services be utilised? (Eg. local health visitors; teachers, etc.).
- The placement of N.N.E.B. students in childminders homes for practical experience and training seems quite common in the Eastern Region. Childminders as "trainers".
- The "training of trainers" (mobile ones!), with counselling skills too, is a priority area for the Eastern Region.

## North East Region

- Considerable diversity between various parts of the North East Region in L.A. support and facilities, and in attitudes to "independence". In some areas there was a need to distinguish between "support" and "supervision" of childminders, and clarify boundaries between "day care" and "special care".
- Similarly, efforts to co-ordinate under-fives services were more advanced in some areas than others, and some help is needed to support groups experiencing a "struggle for survival", and in the organisation of training and support programmes.
- Generally, this is a Region which needs help to develop. Despite some isolated, excellent examples of advance training and good local organisation, the region as a whole seems to be fragmented and in an early stage of development. Yet the meeting demonstrated a willingness to come together to resolve some of these issues.

## The Midlands Regions

- The vastness of the Midlands with its heavy population and comprising industrial conurbations and cities as well as manufacturing towns and isolated rural areas defies any generalised comments on overall needs or problems. The special needs of minders in rural areas equated those of minders in the Eastern Region just as the problems of some of its cities matched those of inner cities elsewhere in the country.
- Generally, childminding in the North and East Midlands appears to be less well developed in terms of integration and the development of training and support programmes than in the South and West Midlands. However, what was lacking in integration is more than adequately made up for in the enthusiasm of both childminders and L.A. workers, and this first opportunity to get together to share ideas and information to overcome the isolation of some of the groups and individuals was highly successful. Arrangements to have joint study days on basic childminding matters are already underway. It seems that these areas will go forward together.
- In the South and West Midlands the situation seemed less clear. Despite better childminding co-ordination in this part of the region there was evidence of widely diverging L.A. practices - ranging from maximum support and well-established training programmes and joint working to virtually complete lack of recognition of responsibility by one county in particular. The role of the N.C.M.A. regional representative and well-established groups will be crucial in offering help to the less well supported areas.
- Meetings in both parts of the region nevertheless produced a wide range of issues for consideration in future training programmes.

## Yorkshire Region

- Another widely diverse region, geographically and socially, as already indicated earlier in the report, but one which induces great optimism and pleasure because of the advances already made in childminding training and support, and the willingness and ability of L.A. workers and childminders to work together and respond creatively to the different needs of their particular areas despite considerable difficulties.

- Childminders appear to be already proficient at isolating their own training needs as evidenced by some of the topics already covered and others arising out of this regional meeting, such as: Child abuse training; Children with behavioural problems; Cultural issues; The need to educate the public, and ways of doing this; The examination of the cost effectiveness of different forms of day care (particularly community care); How to integrate new members into groups with a "closed-shop" atmosphere; and the need to encourage more L.A. workers to join the N.C.M.A., to name but a few. Extremely encouraging.

## Scotland

- An overwhelming response was received for the Scottish Conference with attendance from all over Scotland and was an excellent event. Differences between the regions were noted in policy and practice, needs, stages of development and level of support available in some areas.
- There does appear to be a need for regions in Scotland to get together to formulate a national policy for childminding in Scotland.
- This raised questions about affiliation - (i.e. Whether a separate childminding association for Scotland should be formed or whether to encourage membership of the N.C.M.A. in England).
- The need for development of more isolated areas outside the major cities was confirmed. How to do this will present a challenge.
- The specific problems of Strathclyde were discussed, where a detrimental Fire-Masters report was preventing the development of childminding in Glasgow despite the preparedness and finance to do so.
- Outside the main "day-carer schemes", training and support programmes are still in an early stage of development in Scotland but groups are emerging and the interest in training is lively. However, there is still a need for the regions to have further joint discussions on this and other matters. The extremely wide-ranging discussions which took place at the Conference highlighted numerous issues and areas of concern which members present may wish to take forward.
- In particular, the multi-disciplinary and co-ordinated approach to this event was a very positive feature and one which should be encouraged to continue.

## Wales

- Intended originally as a meeting for the whole of Wales, in effect it attracted members primarily from South and Mid-Wales and the South West of England. In retrospect, it may have been better to invite members from North Wales to the North West region meetings because of easier transport arrangements.
- A very good meeting though - well represented by childminders and various professional groups and voluntary organisations.
- A major issue arising was the isolation and "apathy" normally experienced among childminders and the apparent high turnover

in South Glamorgan (although subsequent feedback after this meeting showed great improvements in attendance at childminding association meetings).

- Considerable discussion is still needed to clarify responsibilities, relationships and boundaries generally and the specific roles of the L.A's and childminders need clarification in some areas too.
- Good information was given on special childminding schemes and wide discussions took place on basic childminding issues, relationships, supply and demand factors, etc.
- A particularly positive result of the meeting was an offer of assistance to childminders in training and support from the representatives of two voluntary organisations present. It is likely this may include accommodation, staff to do home visits and the use of a minibus.
- Other discussions included the possibility of using experienced minders as "link-persons" similar to a scheme already operating in a local school for handicapped children.
- This was a stimulating meeting which served to resolve several issues and highlighted others and positively pointed the way forward in this region.

### (f) Conclusions to Parts 1 and 2 - The way forward in childminding training and support

Parts 1 and 2 of this report have dealt primarily with the background to the project and the current training and support situation in just some of the areas of the country, as highlighted from the series of meetings held over the past year.

Clearly, it is quite impossible to do adequate justice to these discussions in the short space available. Part 2 has given only the barest outline of a few childminding situations and some of the specific issues arising out of the regions. The major part of the work has yet to come. First, in the revision of the Mark II version of the proposed "model", with the adjustment of the topic content outline (in Part 3 of this report) and, later, in the work which is to follow where the development of each individual topic will incorporate many of the ideas discussed during the year.

At this point, however, as this is a time when the N.C.M.A. is considering ways in which childminding generally might go forward, it might be relevant to look more specifically at the possible future development of training and support in childminding and present a few of the ideas on this which emerged from the meetings. For brevity, these are simply listed as points to consider:

- Local and national training campaigns - to heighten awareness.
- Regional and national conferences and study days to continue.
- The appointment of local, regional or national training officers or co-ordinators.
- Seeking funding for the setting up of regional or national Training and Resource Centres.
- To vigorously pursue funding for the further development of this "model" and the development of training materials, to test them out and eventually market them.

- Continuation of the co-operation and work with voluntary organisations whose role in childminding support is proving extremely valuable.
- Encourage better liaison between researchers and "grass-roots" childminding people to ensure that more appropriate research tools are developed and specific projects researched.
- Similarly, to encourage local groups and those organising training initiatives to monitor and evaluate these, possibly with the N.C.M.A. co-ordinating this.
- Further consideration of ways in which the needs of individuals unable or not wishing to attend groups can be supported, and ways of reaching unregistered childminders.
- To continue to place emphasis on developing training from a "shared-care" approach, to encourage joint responsibility and consideration of problems and various childminding issues.
- For priority to be given to seeking positive publicity to improve status by the dissemination of information on childminding training and support programmes.
- For Development Officers of the N.C.M.A. to encourage and advise on the development of groups and training and support programmes.
- Exploring ways in which volunteers or the unemployed may be recruited (possibly on Manpower Service Schemes) to aid in practical areas of work.
- Seeking ways of co-ordinating approaches to training with other under-fives services (Particularly at more advanced levels of training).
- Using the media (local and national radio/regional and national T.V. networks) where possible, particularly for outreach learning.

Some of these suggestions, may at first glance, appear to be rather ambitious but with a vigorous and imaginative training policy some of these goals might be attained. This past year's events have shown that the motivation and enthusiasm is already there - and that's the first major hurdle jumped.

## PART III REVISION OF MODEL FOR CHILDMINDING TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Having undertaken the basic analysis of information from the various regional meetings and isolated 255 issues or topics of concern, a number of questions remained to be asked:-

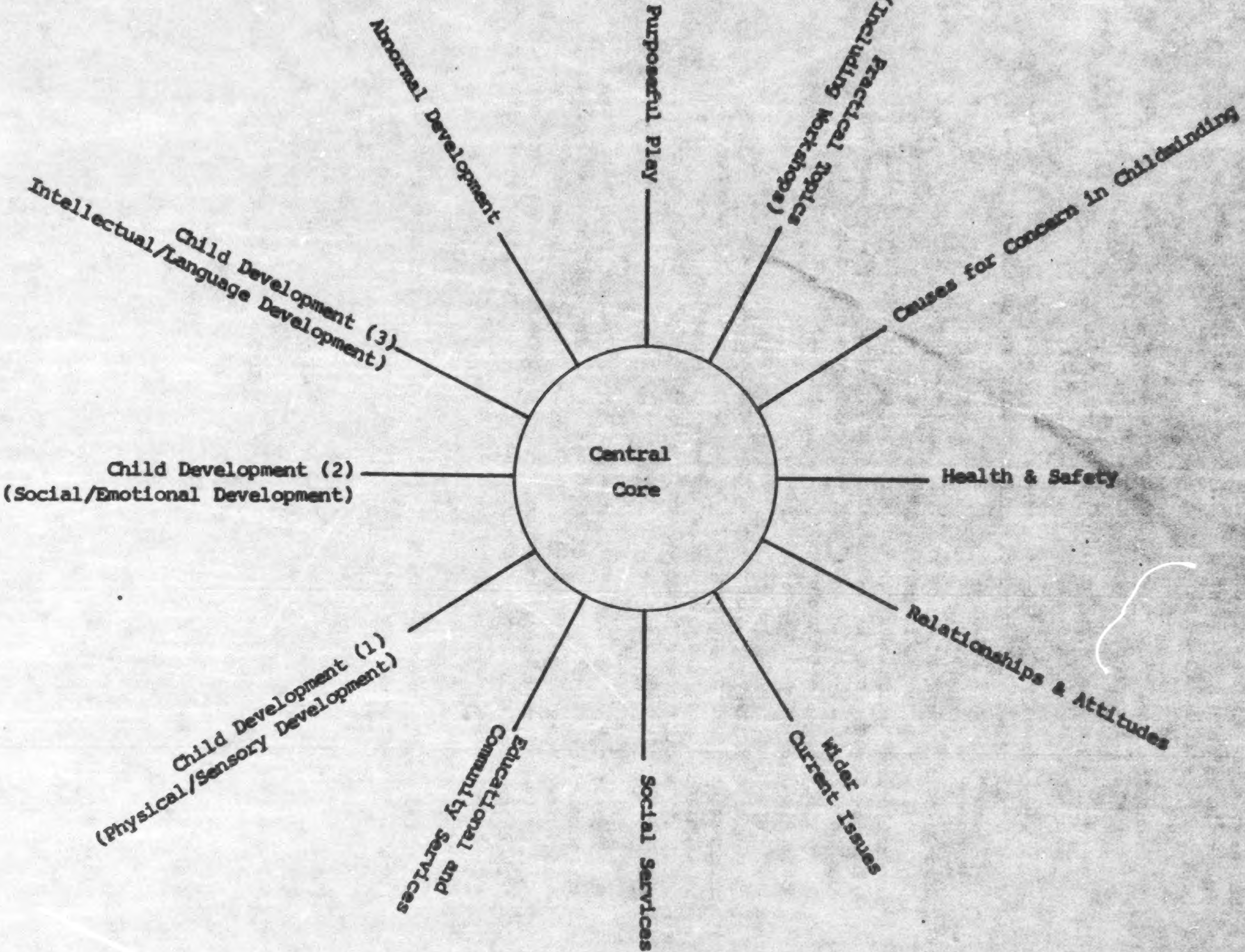
- Was the original framework of the model (of modules, levels and topics) acceptable to childminding?
- Would the issues and topics raised comfortably fit into this framework, if acceptable?
- Which ones of the old and new issues should be included or rejected? (This required further classification of major themes, sub-themes and "linking" topics).

Subsequent feedback from the regions confirmed that the basic framework of the model was acceptable and the range of modules suggested were relevant for childminding training and support programmes. It's emphasis on examining issues from different perspectives generally was liked and so too was the flexibility it offered for various kinds of training situations. The ability to select up and down, and across the whole range of topic options raised considerable interest.

It was clear, however, that some of the original topics were of less interest or priority so needed to be taken out. Others were re-located to a different "level" in the system or were relegated to simply "areas of interest" within other topics where they were relevant but not of major priority.

The classification of the 255 issues and topics raised into major themes, sub-themes and "linking" topics was less of a task than had been originally anticipated because of the similarity between some of these and the earlier highlighted major areas of concern. Also a number of themes were seen to crop up regularly in several of the meetings so certain areas of priority were relatively clear. A few of the issues were rejected where relatively little interest was apparent.

The final result was that the original framework was retained but the overall content was moderately adjusted. The next few pages of Part III lists the revised modules and topics.


Central Core
Purposeful Play
Practical Topics (Including Workshops)
Causes for Concern in Childminding
Health & Safety
Relationships & Attitudes
Wider Current Issues
Social Services
Educational and Community Services
Child Development (1) (Physical/Sensory Development)
Child Development (2) (Social/Emotional Development)
Child Development (3) Intellectual/Language Development)
Abnormal Development

## CENTRAL CORE TOPICS

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - CC - 1 | Legislation and registration |
| L1 - CC - 2 | Financial and Business Matters/Contracts |
| L1 - CC - 3 | Planning and Organisation of one's day |
| L1 - CC - 4 | Settling-in new children |
| L1 - CC - 5 | Childminding groups and drop-ins. |
| L1 - CC - 6 | Different kinds of Childminding and common experiences (an Introduction) |
| | |
| L2 - CC - 1 | Childminding as part of the wider Family Support System |
| L2 - CC - 2 | Childminding Support Services - Local, Regional and National (Role of N.C.M.A.) |
| L2 - CC - 3 | Information and Publicity |
| L2 - CC - 4 | Setting up a support group or drop-in. |
| L2 - CC - 5 | Childminding Training and Support Programmes |
| L2 - CC - 6 | "Self-help" Schemes |
| | |
| L3 - CC - 1 | Economics of Childminding - Supply and Demand Factors and Funding. |
| L3 - CC - 2 | National policy and development |
| L3 - CC - 3 | The Childminders "Career" and status |
| L3 - CC - 4 | Literature and Research on Childminding |
| L3 - CC - 5 | Resource and Training Centres |
| L3 - CC - 6 | The future for childminding - where do we go from here? |

## SOCIAL SERVICES

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - SS - 1 | The role of Social Services in Childminding - Organisation and responsibilities |
| L1 - SS - 2 | Social Services provisions for under-fives. |
| L1 - SS - 3 | People who work in Social Services |
| L1 - SS - 4 | The Working day of an under-5's worker |
| L1 - SS - 5 | Childminding as part of the total child-care system |
| L1 - SS - 6 | Social Welfare provisions |
| | |
| L2 - SS - 1 | Working with families with special needs |
| L2 - SS - 2 | Assessment of needs |
| L2 - SS - 3 | Family Centres |
| L2 - SS - 4 | Special Childminding Schemes - and partnership/ confidentiality issues. |
| L2 - SS - 5 | Childminding as "shared care" - roles and responsibilities |
| L2 - SS - 6 | Child Abuse and Procedures |
| | |
| L3 - SS - 1 | Co-ordination of Under-fives services |
| L3 - SS - 2 | "Community Care" - the Debate |
| L3 - SS - 3 | Vulnerable Groups in Society - Deprived, Disadvantaged or just "Different"? |
| L3 - SS - 4 | Counselling and coping with sensitive situations |
| L3 - SS - 5 | Preventive work in Social Services - Child care as "positive intervention". |
| L3 - SS - 6 | Creating Childminding "Teams" |

## EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - EC - 1 | Educational experiences in everyday life |
| L1 - EC - 2 | Social Opportunities in the community |
| L1 - EC - 3 | Educational Home visitors |
| L1 - EC - 4 | Nursery Education |
| L1 - EC - 5 | Extended day-care (- after school care) |
| L1 - EC - 6 | Local community resources |
| L2 - EC - 1 | Children with special educational needs |
| L2 - EC - 2 | Helping children with special educational needs |
| L2 - EC - 3 | Nursery centres |
| L2 - EC - 4 | "Education" toys and equipment - how to make them |
| L2 - EC - 5 | The role of voluntary organisations and volunteers |
| L2 - EC - 6 | Introduction to community based family work. |
| L3 - EC - 1 | Educational and Social disadvantage |
| L3 - EC - 2 | Educational Intervention Programmes |
| L3 - EC - 3 | National Community and Educational Projects |
| L3 - EC - 4 | Adult/Parenthood Education |
| L3 - EC - 5 | Research with communities and families |
| L3 - EC - 6 | Decision making in the community |

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - HS - 1 | Hazards and Hygiene in the Home |
| L1 - HS - 2 | Nutrition and Diet |
| L1 - HS - 3 | Infactious and notifiable diseases |
| L1 - HS - 4 | Caring for sick children |
| L1 - HS - 5 | First Aid |
| L1 - HS - 6 | Health Visitors and Health Clinics |
| L2 - HS - 1 | Developmental screening, checks and reviews |
| L2 - HS - 2 | The Health of the Adult Caregiver |
| L2 - HS - 3 | Animals in the House |
| L2 - HS - 4 | The "Accident Prone" child |
| L2 - HS - 5 | Some childhood psycho-somatic problems |
| L2 - HS - 6 | What affects the Unborn child? |
| L3 - HS - 1 | Introduction to Preventive Medicine |
| L3 - HS - 2 | Environmental Health Hazards |
| L3 - HS - 3 | Childhood Psychiatric disorders |
| L3 - HS - 4 | Health Education Programmes/Special Child Health Projects |
| L3 - HS - 5 | Adults' Mental Health |
| L3 - HS - 6 | Child Obesity/Malnutrition |

## RELATIONSHIPS AND ATTITUDES

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - RA - 1 | Friendships in childminding: Social isolation |
| L1 - RA - 2 | Involvement in/attachment to children and families |
| L1 - RA - 3 | Substitute or Supplementary parenting? |
| L1 - RA - 4 | Boundaries, responsibilities and "rights" |
| L1 - RA - 5 | Minor irritations which can affect the childminding relationship |
| L1 - RA - 6 | Internal family relationships and everyday pressures; Needs of all family members |
| L2 - RA - 1 | Shared-care - Myth or Reality? Relationships between the various partners |
| L2 - RA - 2 | Serious breakdowns in the care situation |
| L2 - RA - 3 | Attitudes to people who are "different" or "deviant" |
| L2 - RA - 4 | Communication Issues/Breakdowns |
| L2 - RA - 5 | External relationships and wider family needs |
| L2 - RA - 6 | Understanding cultural and social differences in patters of family life. |
| L3 - RA - 1 | Counselling - Can empathy and understanding be taught? |
| L3 - RA - 2 | Introduction of Family therapy |
| L3 - RA - 3 | Ingroups and Outgroups/Discrimination issues |
| L3 - RA - 4 | Introduction to group dynamics/group relationships |
| L3 - RA - 5 | Values and beliefs |
| L3 - RA - 6 | Social Interaction in Everyday life |

## PURPOSEFUL PLAY

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - PP - 1 | Play in the home - can we have mess around the house? |
| L1 - PP - 2 | Toys for children of different ages |
| L1 - PP - 3 | Purposeful play |
| L1 - PP - 4 | Helping around the house - work or play? |
| L1 - PP - 5 | Playing with other children |
| L1 - PP - 6 | Local playschemes/playbuses/toy libraries; Peripatetic schemes |
| L2 - PP - 1 | Creativity - and the "useful box" |
| L2 - PP - 2 | Music and dancing |
| L2 - PP - 3 | Arts and crafts - for children and adults |
| L2 - PP - 4 | Books and stories for young children |
| L2 - PP - 5 | Encouraging self-expression through imaginative/fantasy play |
| L2 - PP - 6 | Play and equipment for children with handicaps or special needs. |
| L3 - PP - 1 | Setting-up a playscheme in a support group |
| L3 - PP - 2 | Older children's play and activity needs |
| L3 - PP - 3 | Introduction to the Psychology of Play |
| L3 - PP - 4 | Therapeutic Play |
| L3 - PP - 5 | Introduction to Piagetian principles of play |
| L3 - PP - 6 | Sex differences - Does boys and girls play have to be different? |

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT (1). PHYSICAL AND SENSORY DEVELOPMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - CD(1) - 1 | Changing "Fashions" in child care/Standards of care - whose standards? |
| L1 - CD(1) - 2 | The baby's "Initial Equipment"/Reflexes, etc. |
| L1 - CD(1) - 3 | Ages and stages - an introduction to developmental milestones |
| L1 - CD(1) - 4 | Basic needs - the first few months |
| L1 - CD(1) - 5 | The daily pattern. (Feeding, sleep, exercise, play) |
| L1 - CD(1) - 6 | Crying and its meanings - can we tell? |
| L2 - CD(1) - 1 | Very small babies and twins/Special care |
| L2 - CD(1) - 2 | Developmental checks and charts/Observation |
| L2 - CD(1) - 3 | The five main senses (Sight, taste, temperature, touch, smell) |
| L2 - CD(1) - 4 | Sleep patterns |
| L2 - CD(1) - 5 | Visual/Perceptual studies |
| L2 - CD(1) - 6 | Individual differences and the bounderies of "normality" |
| L3 - CD(1) - 1 | Typical text-book approaches - Putting theory into practice. |
| L3 - CD(1) - 2 | Critical or vulnerable periods in development |
| L3 - CD(1) - 3 | Babies "states" |
| L3 - CD(1) - 4 | Stimulation and practice effects |
| L3 - CD(1) - 5 | Retarded development - Why? |
| L3 - CD(1) - 6 | When does "development" end? |

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT (2) SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - CD(2) - 1 | Mothering skills - what are they?/Caring for other people's children |
| L1 - CD(2) - 2 | Continuity of care and "Yo-Yo" children |
| L1 - CD(2) - 3 | Emotional security and attachment objects/A new baby in the house |
| L1 - CD(2) - 4 | Potty training - pros and cons. |
| L1 - CD(2) - 5 | Children's "habits" |
| L1 - CD(2) - 6 | Picking-up the baby - Why? |
| L2 - CD(2) - 1 | Jealousy and fears; Feelings |
| L2 - CD(2) - 2 | Cuddly and non-cuddly babies/Failure to thrive children |
| L2 - CD(2) - 3 | Developing social skills - Confidence, assertiveness and independence |
| L2 - CD(2) - 4 | Common social behavioural problems/Punishment and control issues. |
| L2 - CD(2) - 5 | Fear of strangers |
| L2 - CD(2) - 6 | Social and emotional needs of older children in the house |
| L3 - CD(2) - 1 | Introduction to different theories of social and emotional development |
| L3 - CD(2) - 2 | Cultural differences in social behaviour |
| L3 - CD(2) - 3 | Maternal deprivation and attachment theory related to childminding |
| L3 - CD(2) - 4 | Personality development |
| L3 - CD(2) - 5 | Childhood anxieties and depression |
| L3 - CD(2) - 6 | Some therapeutic approaches |

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT (3) INTELLECTUAL AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - CD(3) - 1 | Acting on the world around us |
| L1 - CD(3) - 2 | Out of sight, out of mind? |
| L1 - CD(3) - 3 | Early pre-verbal communication/Body language |
| L1 - CD(3) - 4 | Babbling/First words |
| L1 - CD(3) - 5 | Questions and answers |
| L1 - CD(3) - 6 | Speech of pre-school children |

| | |
|---|---|
| L2 - CD(3) - 1 | Childrens thinking |
| L2 - CD(3) - 2 | Do children tell lies? |
| L2 - CD(3) - 3 | Different learning styles |
| L2 - CD(3) - 4 | "Clumsy" children |
| L2 - CD(3) - 5 | Common language problems/Speech therapy |
| L2 - CD(3) - 6 | What do we mean by "intelligence"? |

| | |
|---|---|
| L3 - CD(3) - 1 | Cognition and social behaviour |
| L3 - CD(3) - 2 | Cultural differences in language |
| L3 - CD(3) - 3 | Introduction to some theories about language development |
| L3 - CD(3) - 4 | Piaget's stages of intellectual development |
| L3 - CD(3) - 5 | Symbolism and Creativity |
| L3 - CD(3) - 6 | Specific learning difficulties |

## ABNORMAL DEVELOPMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - AD - 1 | What do we mean by "abnormal development"?/Assessment of "normality" |
| L1 - AD - 2 | The handicapped child in the community |
| L1 - AD - 3 | Children with special needs |
| L1 - AD - 4 | Minding children with handicaps |
| L1 - AD - 5 | Accepting handicap in the family |
| L1 - AD - 6 | Resources and equipment for the handicapped child - where to go for help |

| | |
|---|---|
| L2 - AD - 1 | Some causes of abnormal development |
| L2 - AD - 2 | Mental or Physical Handicap? - Some examples |
| L2 - AD - 3 | Family projects and relief schemes |
| L2 - AD - 4 | Ways of working with handicapped children |
| L2 - AD - 5 | Children with personality development problems |
| L2 - AD - 6 | Caring for the emotionally deprived child |

| | |
|---|---|
| L3 - AD - 1 | Continuum of "normality". |
| L3 - AD - 2 | Brain damage/dysfunction - the role of the central nervous system. |
| L3 - AD - 3 | Socio-environmental influences in childbirth and after |
| L3 - AD - 4 | Sex differences/vulnerabilities |
| L3 - AD - 5 | Specific examples of therapeutic programmes |
| L3 - AD - 6 | Nature/Nurture Issues |

## PRACTICAL WORKSHOP TOPICS

| | |
|---|---|
| L1 - PW - 1 | Childminding Organisation (legal, business and finance matters). |
| L1 - PW - 2 | First Aid |
| L1 - PW - 3 | Caring for children from different ethnic backgrounds |
| L1 - PW - 4 | Rural childminding - outreach work and developments |
| L1 - PW - 5 | Making toys and equipment on a shoestring budget |
| L1 - PW - 6 | Arts and Crafts and Music |
| L2 - PW - 1 | Setting up a support group, drop-in centre or toy library |
| L2 - PW - 2 | Organising a swap-shop or cheap-purchase scheme |
| L2 - PW - 3 | Fund raising and influencing policy |
| L2 - PW - 4 | Publicity and Information |
| L2 - PW - 5 | Planning a training and support programme |
| L2 - PW - 6 | Observation and Assessment of Children - Charts and recording |
| L3 - PW - 1 | Creating Childminding "Teams" |
| L3 - PW - 2 | Counselling and Support work |
| L3 - PW - 3 | "Training the Trainers" |
| L3 - PW - 4 | Making, obtaining and using Audio-Visual Aids |
| L3 - PW - 5 | Monitoring and evaluation of Group work and Training Courses. |
| L3 - PW - 6 | Local and Regional co-ordination and development |

## CAUSES FOR CONCERN IN CHILDMINDING

These topics are not sub-divided into different levels, or depths of understanding, as each of these areas deserve equal exploration and discussion, so division into levels would be purely arbitrary.

| | |
|---|---|
| CFC - 1 | Legislation Issues - at home and abroad/Childminding in other countries |
| CFC - 2 | "Community Care" Versus "Specialism" - a wider perspective |
| CFC - 3 | The Economics of Childminding - Supply and Demand factors and present trends |
| CFC - 4 | Co-ordination of services for under-fives - Is joint training feasible? |
| CFC - 5 | Childminding Research |
| CFC - 6 | The diversity of Childminding situations |
| CFC - 7 | Unregistered childminding and "unacceptable" standards of care. |
| CFC - 8 | Specialist Childminding/Day fostering - Partnership with the "professionals" |
| CFC - 9 | People on their own - unsupported/Isolation and loneliness |
| CFC - 10 | Childminding as a "pressure group" - How to influence policy |
| CFC - 11 | Compulsory training and certification - Is this necessary? |
| CFC - 12 | "Apathy" in childminding - chosen or induced? |
| CFC - 13 | Attachment of childminders to nursery establishments |
| CFC - 14 | Working in the home - Perceptions and status of childminding as an occupation |
| CFC - 15 | Child Abuse, Family conflict and Childminding |
| CFC - 16 | Men in childminding and "father figures" |
| CFC - 17 | Childminding as part of the wider family support system |
| CFC - 18 | Self-help and the Involvement of other agencies in childminding |

# WIDER CURRENT ISSUES

These are primarily issues which have arisen within childminding discussions yet which have relevance to wider social or development issues of interest to adult caregivers and others. These too have not been subdivided into levels as they deserve similar exploration and discussion, although it is expected that such discussions will of necessity be of undertaken in some depth and more related to individuals' personal development.

| | |
|---|---|
| W.C.I. - 1 | Women at Work |
| W.C.I. - 2 | Family Life and Family networks in a changing society |
| W.C.I. - 3 | Preparation for parenthood |
| W.C.I. - 4 | Deprived, Disadvantaged or just "different"? |
| W.C.I. - 5 | Race and discrimination |
| W.C.I. - 6 | Growing into deviancy |
| W.C.I. - 7 | The Child care system and developments |
| W.C.I. - 8 | The community as our "Total Ecological Environment" |
| W.C.I. - 9 | Sex differences, equalities or inequalities |
| W.C.I. - 10 | Community and adult education or career opportunities |
| W.C.I. - 11 | Environmental Health hazards |
| W.C.I. - 12 | Communication and Language |
| W.C.I. - 13 | Decision making - making choices |
| W.C.I. - 14 | Educational choice and parental involvements |
| W.C.I. - 15 | Integration into the Community |
| W.C.I. - 16 | The Media and its effects |
| W.C.I. - 17 | Confidentiality and privacy - Is this being abused? |
| W.C.I. - 18 | Vulnerable groups in society |

# APPENDIX 1

## Issues raised in two individual group discussions - One, an open group discussion, and the other based upon a selected topic

## Group 1: Open discussion lasting approximately 75 minutes and 22 issues raised

### ( i) Which approach to Training?

- Teaching or "self-help" education? Preference expressed for training in small groups. Sharing with and helping each other, mainly through discussions.
- Benefits felt, even where minding "normal" children with few problems
- Discussion on types of problems resolved.

### ( ii) Standards of care

- Discussion about standards in childminding and minimum levels of care acceptable.

### (iii) Child Abuse

- Need for preparation for N.A.I. on courses and understanding of practice and procedures; Identification of child abuse.
- How to react to parents during and after the event.
- How will this affect relationships or confidence in each other
- Experiences exchanged on this.

### ( iv) Relationships

- Clarification of expectations; Who holds the major responsibility for care of the child? Who sets the "rules" or "standards"?
- How far should one go in meeting parental wishes?
- Process of negotiation discussed.

(Some evidence of rigidity in the views of a couple of members - quickly counteracted by others. Group pressures clearly at work here, effectively)

### ( v) Expectations

- Exploration of the expectations of each partner in the shared-care relationship
- Special understanding of parents needs and expectations
- Parents are as much as a concern to childminders as the children

### ( vi) Training Courses

- Examples of different courses given. One which lasted for one year, for one morning each week.
- Wide range of topics covered and most felt to be useful and interesting
- Preference for kinds of topics such as "How to deal with people" and "Understanding the roles and responsibilities of other people"
- Also - examples given where subsequent courses were built on feedback from earlier courses.
- Stressed need for constant revision and development in training.

(vii) Feelings of Guilt

- Various situations raised where there were particular aspects of guilt and where feelings about this needed resolving.

(viii) Friendship and Commitment to parents

- Boundaries of friendship and commitment, and dangers of becoming too involved so that difficulty is experienced in retracting from over-involvement or handling difficult situations. Examples given.

( ix) Children's "Innocence"

- Discussion about the perceived "innocence" of young children who are open and haven't yet learned to tell lies.
- What are lies? Is it imagination or is there intent to deceive? When does this develop?
- Examples given of some of the outlandish stories children told and relating this to ages and stages of development as well as situations in which stories were told.

( x) Childminders as "teachers"

- What can experienced childminders offer other newer childminders - based upon their own experiences? The following examples were given:

(a) Ways of coping with paternal access problems - where father had no legal access rights on a separation order.

(b) Problems associated with "Yo-Yo" families - where the child was the "piggy-in-the-middle" between antagonistic parents and where the child experiences ambiguous and upsetting behaviour and relationships.

(c) The care of older children with handicaps was raised. Eg. one case where a child suffered from epilepsy.

- The childminder's understanding of his lower mental age, how to use specific control patterns and understand the different needs of the children was shared with less experienced minders.

(d) Help given to single, immature mothers. Supporting and training them. Eg. in handling their child and basic care needs of child, therefore, mothers' needs can take precedence over the child.

(e) Clothing issues. Concern re: poor/inadequate clothing of children being minded. How to deal with this situation without upsetting parents.

(f) A child's excessive fear of loud noises (e.g. washing machine and other household equipment). How this was coped with was shared.

(g) Persistent feeding problems; individual likes and dislikes. When does one give in to preferences or "fads"?

( xi) Fatherless children

- How do children feel about having no daddy? How does one discuss this with them? (Many of the minded children of childminders in this group were from lone-parent families).
- General discussion of the problems of single parents and the kinds of support they need.

### (xii) Middle-Class families

- The "myth" of middle class families was exploded. Examples given of serious behaviour problems of children from "status conscious" or "houseproud" families (Both one and two parent families). Eg. One child who becomes hysterical if he spills anything - and how the minder coped with this and related to the parents.

### (xiii) Lack of direct contact with certain parents

- "Absentee" parents; and other situations where the social worker brings the child daily, so little direct opportunity to discuss with parents.
- Yet, one such child had problems with his sight and also experienced serious family problems. Also, his behaviour deteriorated by Mondays, after weekends at home.
- Minders highly critical of social work practice in such situations, i.e. Communication and contact minimal; no information given about child.

### (xiv) Different kinds of minded children

- Discussion on the different kinds of children referred to
  (a) Day Nurseries (b) Childminders
- Are the differences so real? How do they get referred.
- Subsequent discussion about decision making issues in allocation.

### ( xv) Attention-seeking children

- Brief reference made to a couple of children whose continual need for attention caused problems and why this might be.

### (xvi) Family Life

- What is a "normal" family background? Concern expressed that if children who lack secure family life experiences go to day nurseries, where do they learn about family relationships and family life?
- Discussion followed on changing practice in day nurseries, Eg. taking children out into the community more; Family groupings in nurseries.
- But - the point was raised - Are they really family groups if no babies under 2 years and 4 year olds go to school early?
- Agreed by day nursery staff present in the group that the majority of children in nurseries were between 2 - 4½ years.

### (xvii) Confidentiality

- Childminders involvement in casework discussions questioned. If she is to be regarded as part of the "sharing team" then she needs more positive involvement.
- Foster parents are invited to attend case-conferences - why not minders too? The opinions of minders who care for the child are rarely sought.
- Strong feelings too about being expected to work without the right "tools for the job".
- Yet confidentiality works in reverse too - where parents confide in minders and then minders have to decide what is appropriate to disclose to social workers.

(xviii) Role of Health Visitors

- What should this be in relation to childminding?
- Brief discussion followed on situations where Health Visitors saw minded children in minders' homes and the need to seek parents' views and approval for this.

(xix) What does training give to Childminders?

- Confidence, experience, social contacts mainly.
- The ability to be confident enough to make demands from Social Work agencies was felt to be important if childminding was to get better working conditions and improved status.
- "Self-development" was regarded as just as important as understanding about children's behaviour.

( xx) Practical issues to consider in Training

- Times of courses debated, and what was an "ideal time"
- Need to have "space" to be with own families in evenings, so daytimes were convenient, but practical difficulties such as creche facilities, transport, getting children home from school etc.
- Local, neighbourhood courses and groups are preferred if good attendance is to be encouraged.

(xxi) Multidisciplinary approaches

- How realistic and desirable is this? Eg. Pros and Cons of undertaking training sessions within day nurseries were discussed. Generally not liked.
- Some compatible areas of interest but care in the home is different to group care as well as more complex relationships.
- Childminders - often feel the "poor cousin" in multidisciplinary training. Why?

(xxii) Kinds of Courses

- Examples given of more kinds of courses - yet generally agreed that a lot of debate still needs to go on as not all of these group members had had experience of courses.
- One example was given of "Induction Courses" in outlying areas, on a visiting playbus.

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Group 2: Specific topic selected was "Training the trainers". Discussion lasted for one hour and revolved around the following questions:

- What are the needs of trainers and how can they be supported?
- Will this differ depending on the kind of course or group? If so, how?
- What are the special needs of people supporting/training those who do not wish to attend, or cannot get to groups?

( i) The functions of a trainer/group leader were first defined, and included: course design, facilitating, supporting, counselling, educating, observing and monitoring of group work, handling group dynamics, possible evaluation of course or group. Communication skills felt to be essential too. Trainers should be more of a "catalyst" rather than a teacher. The "motivator" person - able to offer support, encouragement and information - to groups or individuals. An essential member of childminding "teams".

( ii) The range of different training situations was considered. Various approaches to training; how the approach adopted would depend on the topic or course selected and the depth of coverage; Local/ geographical differences.

(iii) What makes an "ideal" trainer? - Who are the people who do the training? Different kinds of trainers described: Course tutors; Group leaders; Primary contact "link" persons; social services under fives workers and their supervisors; Wider adult and community education "experts".

( iv) Different kinds of training - Support and information for childminders; parents needs to understand childminding care situation and information requirements; in-service training for social workers. The difference was emphasized between the necessity for early information needs and more advanced skills and understanding.

( v) Additional tasks of a trainer - To have a good understanding of local facilities or resources and take a major "co-ordinating" role; reproduce printed materials or provide other stimulus materials or information; to generally know who and what is available, and how cheaply it can be obtained. How to use resources to best advantage.

( vi) Should there be a single trainer or several? - Pros and cons of this discussed in some depth. Generally concluded that a single person ought to undertake this work in localised areas otherwise it gets too confusing and there may be communication blocks. However, he/she needed support and assistance herself, so where best is this obtained? - Local colleges, national education and training centres, social services training departments? The concept of "training and support resource centres" was proposed.

(vii) Resource centres for training

- What would be its purpose? Should it be local, regional or national?
- How would it be funded?
- What facilities could it provide? - Suggestions were: advice on setting up training programmes; training materials; toy loans and library facilities; loans of audio visual aids and "teaching packs" (eg. films, slides, equipment and stimulus materials); maintain links between L.A's, Childminding and Parents Groups, Health Authorities and various professional bodies; Produce and print materials; have a major liaison role with other pre-school and day-care provisions, work place and community nurseries, etc; Assist with funding applications; train trainers locally.
  (Such a resource centre in the U.S.A. was described as a possible model).

(viii) Finance/Funding

- How does one set about obtaining funds for these "ideal" support services?
- It was felt that L.A's would be unlikely to fund them in the

light of present cutbacks - yet should do so if they specifically use childminding.

- Private organisations, industry, charitable groups, voluntary organisations were all possible sources of funding. Government too might consider funding a major national resource centre.
- Who would be responsible for payment of tutors/group leaders and trainers?

( ix) Areas for special consideration for trainers

- Development of special skills for one-to-one support in home settings.
- The need to develop localised training programmes and support systems.
- "Link-persons" locally, to relate to/and support small numbers of minders and parents in neighbourhood communities, and to help in the setting up of informal groups as well as undertake initial visiting.
- To develop self-help "pressure groups"

(  x) Conclusions of this group discussion

- A full and purposeful discussion - no clear answers reached but many issues about training of trainers were explored. The trainer was regarded as a crucial person who needed to be involved right at the beginning when a prospective minder first considered registration. So, the trainer was not simply a "course organiser" - although might well be responsible for initiating/running courses as one part of her total function.
- Account needed to be taken of the rapid turnover in childminding and the need for training on a "shoestring budget".
- Skills isolated during this group discussion could be taught - but that the "trainers" had to be persons who were responsible, sensitive, committed and confident, be a major "motivator", and have a good understanding of the local situation and what resources were available, to be able to respond to changing needs and have some practical skills yet it did not necessarily need to be a "professional" person (although might well be).
- More use should be made of L.A. training officers who would have the skills to "train trainers".
- The N.C.M.A. might take a leading role in initiating or organising resource centres as well as helping to improve public opinion by encouraging training in childminding.